

PLAYSTATION 4

PLAYAU



ISSUE NO 245
LORRAINE, I'M YOUR DENSITY

THE BIGGEST FPS EVER MADE, FIRST ON PS4

DESTINY

FIFA 15

Hands-on! Can EA return to world class form?

"GAMES STILL TREAT PEOPLE LIKE CHILDREN"

The Witcher 3 devs on PS4's first mature RPG

DRIVECLUB

First verdict on Evolution's stunning racer

CALL OF DUTY

ADVANCED WARFARE

Activision heads to the future to destroy Titanfall

PS3 LIVES ON

35 reasons to hang on to your old console

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FREEDOM WARS
BOUND BY FLAME
WOLFENSTEIN
WATCH DOGS
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Inside the biggest shooter ever made

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WAR HAS CHANGED



AS MUCH AS I love backing a winner, there's also nothing quite like a good close race. And now, with Microsoft offering a Kinect-free Xbox One for the same price as

Sony's console and Nintendo finally finding a Wii U killer app in *Mario Kart 8*, it seems as though Sony's dominance in the new console market might not be quite so secure. Of course, PS4 is still the best console of the three from a hardware perspective, and by no small margin. But with fire sales helping the Wii U install base grow and pricing parity between MS and Sony's consoles, things could be about to get interesting.

From hereon in, it'll be all about the games. And while only a fool would write off any of the first-party lineups, you need only look at how Sony's exclusives outshone their rivals last generation to get an idea of how this will pan out. *Killzone* and *inFamous* already look far better than anything else on console, soon to be joined by the efforts of one of the most dependable and talented studios in the world right now. When Naughty Dog arrives on PS4 properly (as in, not just with an upscaled port of a PS3 game), we're expecting something very special indeed and the kind of game that will really turn heads, change minds and shift consoles.

It's not even just the exclusives, though. As we discover in this issue, even huge third-party titles like *Watch Dogs* and *Destiny* look and play better on the Sony platform than the competition, even offering exclusive gameplay and earlier access that you simply can't get anywhere else. If Sony can continue this trend and attract the right partners, it could maintain and extend its lead before you even factor in its own games. The race is heating up, then, but there's still only one sensible choice...

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

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CURRENTLY PLAYING
Ultra Street Fighter IV (PS3)

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THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

An inside look at the
biggest RPG on PS4

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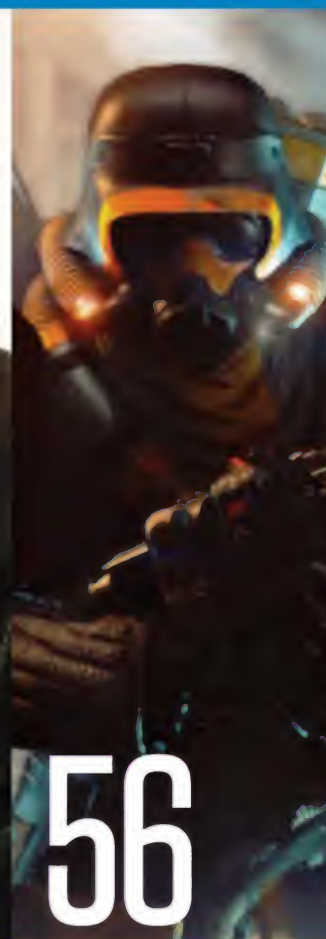
Sony's racer gears up for greatness



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It's not all about PS4, you know

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"THE THING THAT HAS US THE MOST EXCITED FOR DESTINY ARE THE STORIES THAT PLAYERS WILL CREATE WITH EACH OTHER"



DESTINY

SAY HALO TO YOUR NEW FAVOURITE SHOOTER

"We're compelling gamers to expect more from an action game," says Bungie community manager David Dague. He is talking about *Destiny*, the upcoming mixture of FPS and MMO from the famous *Halo* developer. "We are blurring the lines that separate it from other genres. At its core, *Destiny* is a first-person shooter with the sort of excitement that gamers have come to expect from Bungie. From there, we've developed outward in every direction.

"Instead of levels we're creating worlds in *Destiny*, places that should feel real and alive. As a hero in that world, you'll create a central character that will evolve in exciting ways the more you accomplish. The expanses that these player-driven characters will explore are bigger than anything we've ever built. Finally, we packed those destinations with a ton of fun things to do – there are explosive moments in which you'll team up with other heroes in random encounters to overcome incredible odds together."

Bungie has always been good at interacting with fans, but as a community manager, Dague has his work cut out with *Destiny*. While the team is avoiding using the term 'MMO', *Destiny* has a lot in common with the genre, and as such, conversing with users is more important than ever.

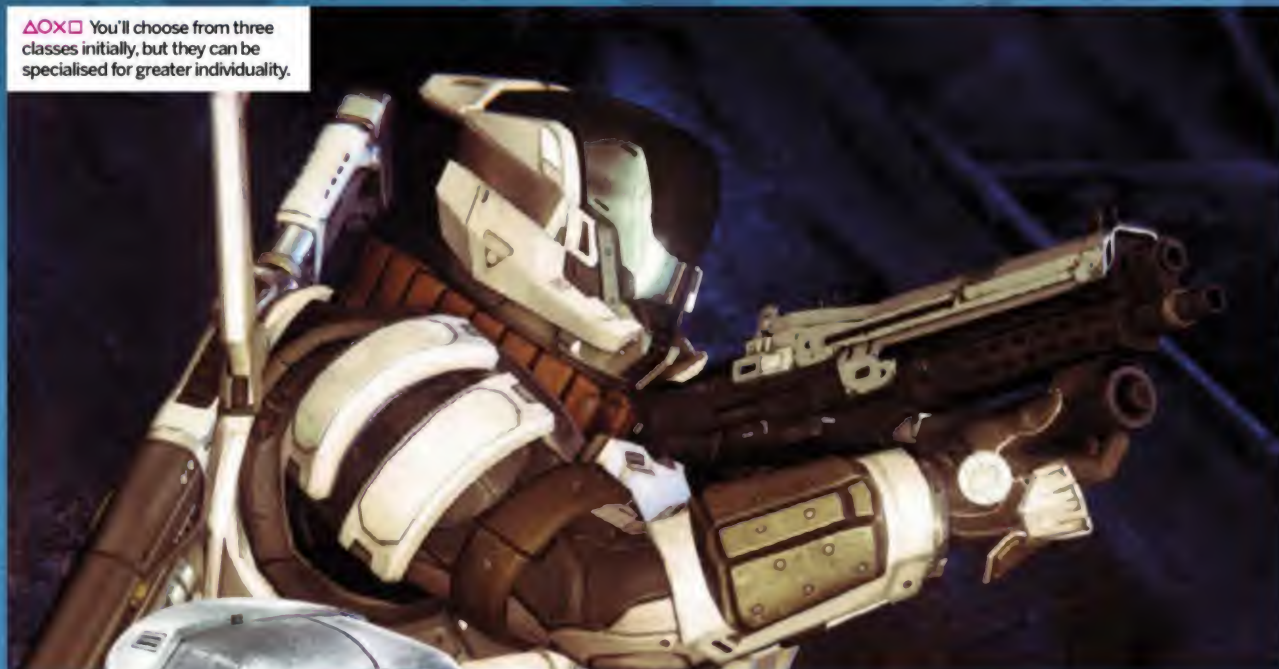
At a glance, *Destiny* seems like a potent mixture of *Halo*, *World Of Warcraft* and *Borderlands*. Players mingle in a shared hub world before grouping up and heading off into instanced versions of the galaxy, while behind-the-scenes matchmaking drops players into your world to meet at random when in the field. While online fans might be salivating at the proposition, those who enjoyed the single-player campaigns of *Halo* might be left concerned. Dague ensures us that there is nothing to worry about.

"*Destiny* still spins a linear tale that will satisfy lovers of traditional FPS storytelling," he explains. "There is a story in this game with a distinct beginning, middle and end. That epic narrative can be enjoyed as a team of one, or with your friends."

"Story missions are just one way to enjoy the heart-pounding action of *Destiny*. The entire game is built on themes of mystery and adventure. Everything you'll do in the game will deepen your understanding of a world in which humanity is fighting to restore the glory of a golden age lost to destruction."

"The thing that has us the most excited for *Destiny* are the stories that players will create with each other. Our hope is that your favourite characters will

△×□ You'll choose from three classes initially, but they can be specialised for greater individuality.



be your friends. The Guardians that you bring along for the ride will be your most powerful and colourful allies."

While most gamers these days enjoy playing online, there remains a holdout group who rarely touch anything aside from single-player experiences. Dague is very keen to ensure that these gamers will have just as much fun with *Destiny* as the MMO diehards.

"The social engagements in *Destiny* are completely elective. Participation in cooperative missions or public events won't be required for a player to

advance through the story. The most important moments of the story are things you can enjoy all by yourself, or with the company of your most trusted friends. We're very curious to see what sort of role the strong, silent type will play in our living, social world. Our goal will be to give them a reason to enjoy combat with other Guardians, and surprise them with elective activities that are fun and rewarding in ways that don't distract from what they love about games."

As well as the option to play solo, *Destiny* is made up of two main parts: cooperative and competitive play.



A BUNGIE™ TIMELINE

MAY 1991

Bungie is founded as Bungie Software Products Corporation by University of Chicago undergraduate Alex Seropian

OCTOBER 1991

The first game published by the company is *Operation: Desert Storm* for the Mac, a top-down tank shooter developed solely by Seropian

1992

Seropian meets programmer Jason Jones at an artificial intelligence course. The two team up to release Jones's game, *Minotaur: The Labyrinths Of Crete*





"THE TOWER WILL BE THE SOCIAL HUB WHERE PLAYERS WILL COME TO UPGRADE THEIR BUILDS OR STRUT THEIR STUFF"

Dague tells us that no one part is more emphasised than the other, and it is up to you to decide how you want to play.

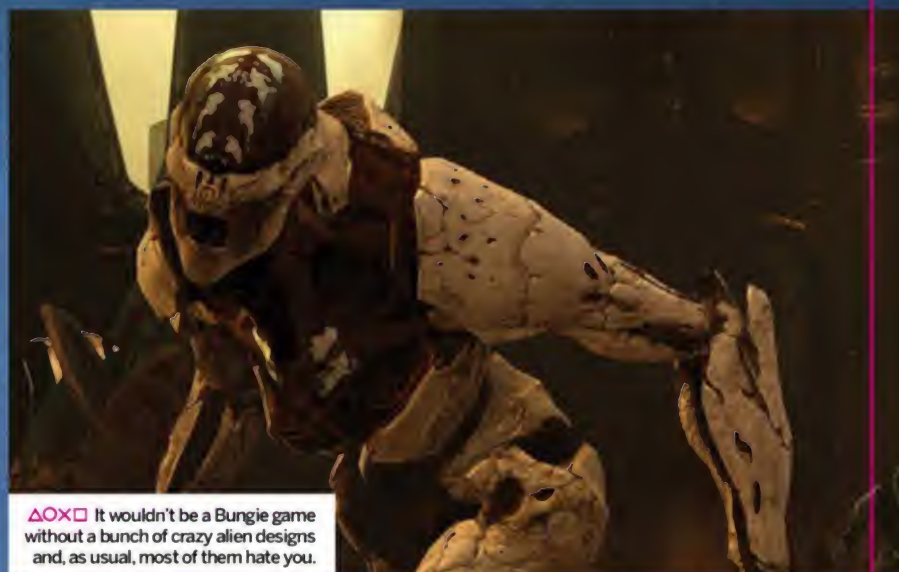
"We're looking to the player to provide that balance," Dague says. "Destiny is all about choice. As a Guardian of the last safe city, you'll decide which character you want to play and which path you'll follow. There are separate activities to satisfy the entire spectrum of social or competitive gameplay. Rewards that are bound to each activity will define Guardians, and make them curious about the other possibilities for action and fortune."

Filter through the PR spiel and the gist of the message is that *Destiny* can be played as you like it. Solo players can stick to themselves, although you'll still exist in the same world as others – you just don't have to interact with them. The main meat of the game seems to consist of co-op missions, although the people needed for each doesn't seem particularly set in stone. *Destiny* will scale in challenge to meet the number of people in your group, although different mission types are geared toward certain group sizes.

Strikes, for example, are built for three players, as Dague explains.

"A Strike is a cooperative mission for three Guardians. Our goal in creating this activity was to establish a clear path to action, and empower the player to storm in and kick alien ass without the entanglements of problem solving or exploration. Those elements can be found in other activities. Strikes are rooted in firefights. They will feature a set destination, a specific target and some very substantial rewards. Gamers can form up with their friends list or let matchmaking equip them with deadly allies. The goal is always to infiltrate an enemy stronghold, obliterate wave after wave after hostile aliens and take down a boss that's standing between you and your loot."

Strikes seem like a fast track straight to the action, but other mission types will facilitate various types of play. While there is still much we don't know, we have heard of two more mission categories: Patrols and Raids. Dague explains a bit, but he seems eager to not give everything away just yet.



△○×□ It wouldn't be a Bungie game without a bunch of crazy alien designs and, as usual, most of them hate you.



△○×□ While Bungie is promising a similar experience across all platforms, the PS4 version will obviously outperform the PS3.



△○×□ You'll be visiting places all over Earth and the Solar System, from the moon to Mars.

1993

Working from home, the two develop another Mac game, a first-person shooter called *Pathways Into Darkness*. The game is a big success and allows Bungie to move into an office and begin hiring more staff



21 DECEMBER, 1994

The team releases its first truly famous game, *Marathon*. Acting as the Mac equivalent of *Doom*, *Marathon* introduced a number of elements to the genre we now take for granted: a much larger focus on story than contemporaries, the ability to look up and down with the mouse as well as side to side and a LAN deathmatch mode for up to eight players. The game is a huge success among Mac owners



24 NOVEMBER, 1995

Marathon 2: Durandal is released, introducing a co-op mode that would later become a signature element of Bungie games



"INSTEAD OF LEVELS WE'RE CREATING WORLDS IN DESTINY – PLACES THAT SHOULD FEEL REAL AND ALIVE"

"The *Destiny* beta will be a great way for players to familiarise themselves with activities that will be available in the launch version of the game. The Patrols in *Destiny* satisfy the primal urge to explore. Players are given free-reign over the destinations in the game. The factions in the City will always have missions that they need completed. Completing those errands will give the landscape structure and a call to action.

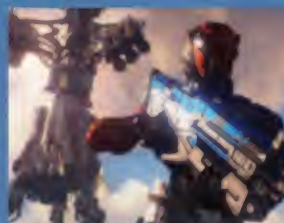
"Raids are an endgame mystery that we're saving. You should be

prepared to bring a team that's ready to work together. Bring your best game, too. Raids are for the brave."

But once you've finished the story, what is the point of continuing with these missions, day after day? The thing is, despite how adamantly Bungie wants to avoid the MMO label, that's essentially what it is. Players create a character choosing from one of three Guardian classes before levelling up and further specialising themselves. You'll equip loot and weapons, each with its own level of

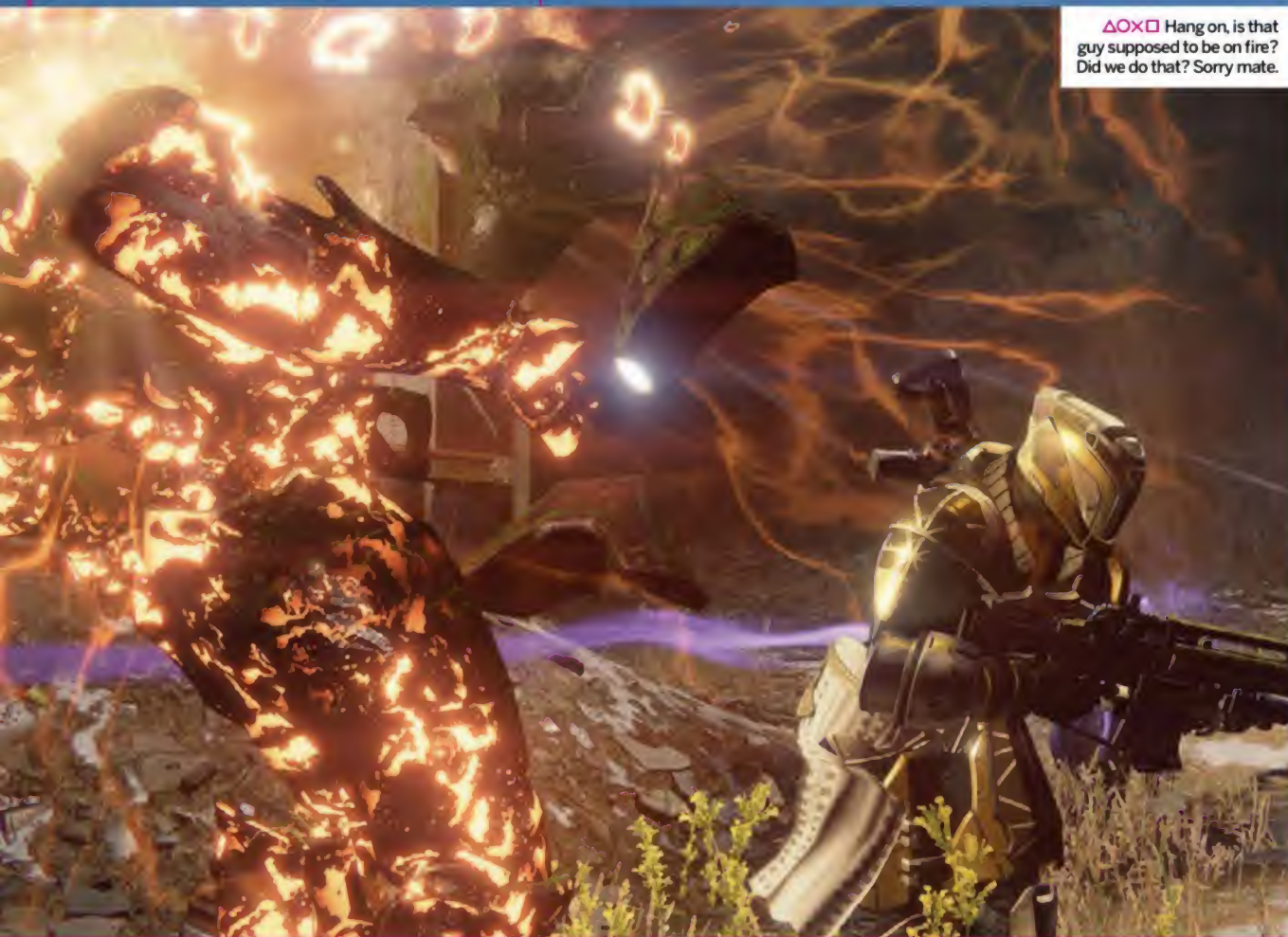


ΔOX□ Just like *Halo*, there are numerous vehicles to drive, from small buggies to spaceships.



ΔOX□ Hopefully you can customise the looks of your gun.

ΔOX□ Hang on, is that guy supposed to be on fire? Did we do that? Sorry mate.



rarity and power, and the quest for better stuff will be the basic gameplay loop that fuels the endgame. Anyone with even a passing experience of an MMO will feel right at home here. Still, Dague explains that Bungie is aiming to have something for everyone, not just the loot-obsessed, endgame-focused hardcore crowd.

"Players of every variety supply their own motivations to play their favourite games again and again. We aim to enable all of them. Lovers of the story who enjoy savouring their favourite moments again and again can do so with different teammates, as different classes of Guardian, or with different weapons or abilities at their fingertips. Masters of the competitive arena will always be chasing the next-best warrior on their friends list. Explorers will have secrets and treasures to plunder in every corner of this mysterious world. And, of course, people who find it relaxing to shoot aliens in the face will find them in endless supply. Wrapped around all of these activities will be a deep and wide reward system that will enable them to invest in their own personal hero."

That reward system will be the key hook that keeps many players coming back over the months to come. Finding better loot to do harder dungeons and raids – in turn earning

15 OCTOBER, 1996

Marathon Infinity, the final part of the *Marathon* trilogy, is released for Mac



25 NOVEMBER, 1997

Bungie moves away from the FPS genre and releases *Myth: The Fallen Lords*, a real-time tactics game for PC and Mac. A sequel follows a year later



1999

Bungie announces its next project at the Macworld Expo 1999 keynote: *Halo*. While presented as an FPS, the game was originally envisioned as a strategy title – essentially 'Myth in a sci-fi universe'. *Halo* is planned to be released on Mac, PC and PS2



19 JUNE, 2000

Microsoft announces it has acquired Bungie and *Halo* will become an exclusive launch title for the upcoming Xbox. This is quite a big deal





FACTS & FIGURES



\$265,000,000

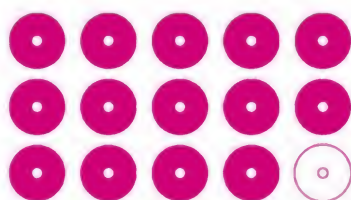
The amount spent on making *Destiny*, the most expensive game ever, and *GTA V*, a far second

\$500,000,000+



500

Approximate number of people currently employed by Bungie

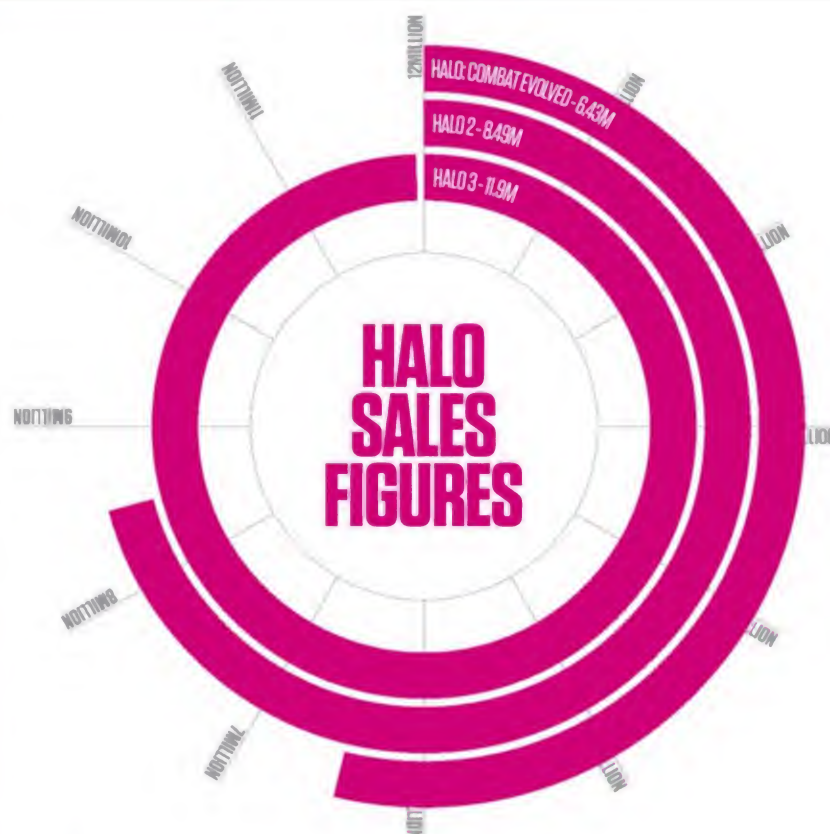


15

Destiny will be the 15th game developed by Bungie

7

Bungie is obsessed with this number, for some reason



\$1 BILLION+

The amount the *Halo* franchise has grossed to date, and it keeps on rising

235,182

The number of years total play time racked up by online *Halo* players. That's over 2 billion hours. Madness.

LINE OF DIALOGUE

3,000
HALO

14,000
HALO 2

39,000
HALO 3

29 JANUARY, 2001

Oni, the first and only game developed by Bungie West is released on PC, Mac and PS2. A third-person action game, it receives mixed reviews and goes largely under the radar





ΔOX□ Don't call it magic, but you'll have special powers you can use to harm foes and buff allies. This is an MMO, after all.



ΔOX□ Now that is a view. Bungie has always been excellent when it comes to art direction and environment design.

better gear to go on and complete even tougher challenges and quests – is the core gameplay loop that MMO games have largely been based around since their inception.

"There is a vivid economy devoted to creating the perfect Guardian in *Destiny*," Dague tells us. "The Tower will be the social hub where players will come to upgrade their builds or strut their stuff. A marketplace of merchants and vendors will be at the ready to trade the loot earned on your journey for the tools you'll need to get the next job done. There are weapons to acquire or restore. A beautiful palette of gear and armour will let you craft your own unique hero. The natural resources you scrounge from the wastelands can be redeemed to make yourself more powerful."



Another element of MMO and multiplayer games important to players is guilds or clans, forming a virtual family with your friends and tackling the challenges of this new world together. It's a subject that Bungie has kept quiet on, and one that Dague is strangely evasive about when we ask him.

"Players can display their solidarity with the factions of the City through the gear they wear or the weapons that they carry. As for social support, you'll learn more about how we'll help to bring the players of *Destiny* together when the *Destiny* companion [app] launches. We're working aggressively behind the scenes to reinvent the social phenomenon that we've been supporting for years with bungle.net. This time around, it will be an experience you can carry with you in the palm of your hand."

15 NOVEMBER, 2001

Halo: Combat Evolved is released for the Xbox. To say the game is important is a huge understatement, as *Halo* can be almost entirely attributed with re-inventing the FPS genre. The game was an enormous success, and rightly so



9 NOVEMBER, 2004

Halo 2 is released for Xbox. Selling even more than the first game, it sets records all over the place and makes a lot of money. As well as the campaign, *Halo 2* introduces online multiplayer on Xbox Live and defines console multiplayer for the internet generation



25 SEPTEMBER, 2007

Halo 3 is released for the Xbox 360. It sells millions, makes millions, and garners amazing reviews across the board



1 OCTOBER, 2007

Bungie announces that it is splitting from Microsoft and becoming a private company. A deal between the two indicates that they will continue working together on *Halo* projects, with Microsoft retaining the rights to the franchise





△OX□ This looks like a boss to us. Just throw grenades at it and run away.



"DESTINY IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS PROJECT THAT BUNGIE HAS TACKLED IN MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF MAKING GAMES"

From the sounds of it, clans and guilds will be supported via the companion app, and how much effect this actually has in-game is yet to be seen. It's sure to be there in some form, potentially added somewhere down the line as post-launch DLC. Bungie has reassured fans that it will be supporting *Destiny* through content patches and DLC expansions for years after release in an effort to keep the game alive. After all, this is the most expensive game ever produced, a huge juggernaut of ambition and potential for both Bungie and Activision.

"*Destiny* is the most ambitious project that Bungie has tackled in more than 20 years of making games. We've reinvented the way we build the worlds you'll explore. We've gone back to the drawing board to conceive of new ways for players to come together to share in the action. Nothing about

Destiny is a rehash of something we've known. Every aspect of this game was rebuilt from the ground up to contribute to a fun experience that's social and cooperative, and fun."

Break through the marketing barrage and there are a ton of reasons to be excited about *Destiny*. Mixing FPS gameplay with an MMO template isn't quite as revolutionary as Bungie is claiming, but the real reason to be excited is exactly that: Bungie is developing it. *Halo* really was a revelation when it first released, and few developers are better at creating tight, endlessly enjoyable sci-fi FPS experiences. If it can take the classic, perfectly-pitched gameplay it is known for and meld it to a template that encourages new content for years to come, *Destiny* really could be another new beginning for first-person shooters on console.



△OX□ Three classes, three different ways to play the game. You'll be able to make more than one character if you fancy giving them all a try.



△OX□ Who needs guns when you have crazy magic? Okay, it's not magic per se, but... yeah, okay, it's magic.

22 SEPTEMBER, 2009

Halo 3: ODST, originally intended as DLC, is released as a stand-alone expansion for *Halo 3*



29 APRIL, 2010

Bungie announces that it is entering into a ten-year publishing deal with Activision Blizzard under which Bungie retains the rights to its own intellectual properties



14 SEPTEMBER, 2010

Halo: Reach is released for Xbox 360 – the final *Halo* game Bungie would create. It's a wonderful game and a great way for Bungie to go out. *Halo 4* is later developed by a new studio and while received well, it simply isn't the same



17 FEBRUARY, 2013

After an extended period of radio silence, Bungie announces its new IP: *Destiny*. A 'shared-world experience' that combines elements of FPS, MMO and RPG. Bungie is both sticking with what it knows and pushing new boundaries, all at once





WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

Advanced Warfare contains a bunch of relatively plausible new technologies. We've got hordes of unmanned drones, hover bikes, wearable exoskeletons and guns that scan for targets.



KEVIN SPACEY

Advanced Warfare stars Kevin Spacey. We like *House Of Cards*, but is the addition of a Hollywood star enough to pique your interest in another *Call Of Duty* game?

ETA 4 NOVEMBER

DEV SLEDGEHAMMER GAMES

PUB ACTIVISION

TWITTER @CALLOFDUTY

Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare

American Shooty



WHAT WOULD YOU do if you had to revitalise a franchise that once ruled the world? Set it in the future? Nick the wall-running from *Titanfall*? Get Kevin Spacey involved? Well, this is *Call Of Duty* and Activision doesn't do things by half measures, so... all of the above?

The *Call Of Duty* series has moved to a three-studio, three-year development cycle, and as such this is the first main entry to the series developed by neither Infinity Ward or Treyarch. Instead, Sledgehammer Games steps up to bat for the first time. Founded in 2009 by a couple of developers from Visceral Games (responsible for *Dead Space*),

the studio already has *COD* experience, helping Infinity Ward with *Modern Warfare 3*.

Still, this is the team's first full game, but that could actually be a blessing in disguise. Over the last few years, many would argue that Treyarch's *COD* games have been more inspired and entertaining than Infinity Ward's increasingly tired offerings, with the 'B Team' more eager to tinker with the winning *Call Of Duty* formula. Hopefully Sledgehammer is equally willing to freshen things up rather than follow Infinity Ward's template to the letter.

Black Ops 2 was already set a bit in the future, but *Advanced Warfare* takes it a tad further. We've got all your near-future warfare tropes on show:

mechanical exoskeletons, unmanned drones, cloaking devices, guns with scanning devices and yes, wall-running and parkour. Still, there are no laser guns or space aliens – this remains a relatively near-future setting, and most of the tech seems like a logical progression of the stuff soldiers use today.

But enough of all that – Kevin Spacey is in it! That alone seems to be enough to get a lot of people interested and, to be fair, we do really like *House Of Cards*. Like many games set in the near future, *Advanced Warfare* deals with the rise of PMCs, Private Military Companies (war... has changed). Spacey plays Jonathan Irons, the owner of ATLAS, one of the largest PMCs in the world that declares

PRIOR FORM

Call Of Duty: Ghosts Infinity Ward's latest COD was nowhere near up to the standards of its biggest hits. It was better than *Modern Warfare 3*, but not by much.

WAR... HAS CHANGED

The plot revolves around the leader of a PMC who declares war on the USA. Lots of games seem to paint the future of warfare as a profit-led, PMC-filled business: could this ever really be the case?



△○×□ At least 'man with gun' has become 'man in robot suit with gun'. Progress is slow, but we'll get there...

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ More *Call Of Duty*, which will make a lot of people very happy.

○ Set in the near future, with a bunch of cool new technology.

× Wall running, just like another wall running shooty game we won't mention.

○ KEVIN SPACEY!

"CALL OF DUTY IS THE DUMB HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER OF THE VIDEOGAMES WORLD, AND IT CERTAINLY DELIVERS ON THAT FRONT"

war on the United States government. Irons seems disenfranchised with the concept of democracy, and sees people as desiring of a leader who will set boundaries and protect them, from each other as well as themselves. While it sounds like a story with potential for exploration of what true freedom means, the role of government in the lives of citizens and the concept of war for profit, a quick glance of the trailer shows more of the Michael Bay-style Hollywood shooty-bangs that the series has devolved into in recent years.

Not that there is anything wrong with that, of course. *Call Of Duty* is the dumb Hollywood blockbuster of the videogames world, and it certainly delivers on that front. The main character will be fully equipped with a mechanical exo-suit, although this

is more of a skeletal harness than a mech. This suit bestows extra mobility and verticality, with the player able to jump higher as well as grapple onto objects as well as, yes, run along walls in a manner similar to that of a certain recent Xbox exclusive.

Of course, a huge amount of *COD* fans don't care one bit about any of this – all they want to know about is the multiplayer. On this, Activision has kept quiet, which follows previous reveals. The single-player is always revealed initially, given a bit of time to gestate before a specific multiplayer reveal event shows the fanbase what it really wants to see.

The addition of the exoskeleton could have big ramifications for the multiplayer. Giving players more manoeuvrability in every dimension would require maps far more open and somewhat larger

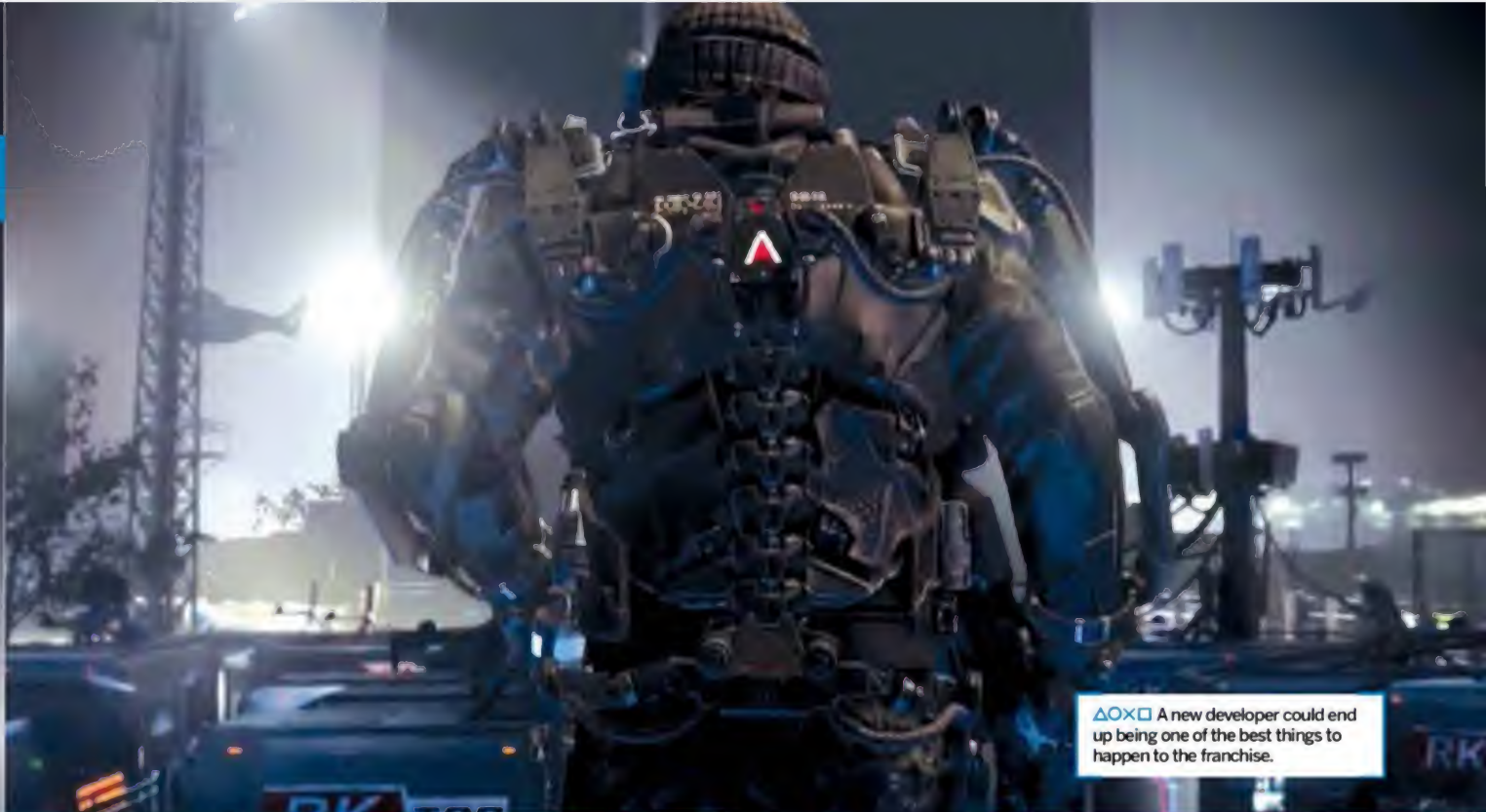
than the tight, fast-paced arenas that fans are used to. It's probably more likely that Sledgehammer will limit the use of the exoskeleton in multiplayer, rather than having to essentially develop an entirely new multiplayer game to accommodate the new movement abilities.

Just like last year, the game is coming to PS3 as well as PS4, although the last-gen versions are being ported by a separate developer. Still, it means that those expecting *Killzone* levels of graphical beauty will probably be disappointed. *Call Of Duty* has always emphasised performance over graphics, and this year will be no different.

That seems to be the key theme when it comes to *Call Of Duty*. Small things may change, but on the whole this is the same game we've been playing for years. Is a bit of wall-running and Kevin Spacey enough to revitalise the series? Time will tell...

Sam Smith

CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE is in training at Sledgehammer Games. Check the website for more details: www.callofduty.com/advancedwarfare



ΔΟΧ□ A new developer could end up being one of the best things to happen to the franchise.



WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

It looks meh and not the good kind of meh the bad type of meh :D
@TheDarkLord3223

Although I'm not a huge fan, I think it looks bloody awesome! Mainly because Kevin Spacey.
@Ward_17

f Its gonna be proper shit. (hope you can have curse words in ur mag). Proper arse.
Jim Beans

f They do, they printed it when I said the last wolfenstein was bollocks ^ :D
John Murray



ΔΟΧ□ Is there an option to drop this guy? We hope so. We need our hands free to carry BIG GUNS.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ Realistic player models and animations, all courtesy of EA's Ignite engine.
- Player emotions now affect gameplay, from frustration to high tension.
- ✕ Better ball physics – players' legs no longer act like pinball bumpers.
- Get more physical with shoulder charges, shirt pulling and more in real time.

FIFA 15

The football is officially going on forever



THERE'S A GOOD chance you've already noticed this, but there's a fair amount of football happening at the moment. Something about a 'world cup', apparently – we've got a cupboard full of cups, but at least these underprivileged sorts have settled on a sporting way of deciding who gets to use the one clean one that every country seems so keen to drink from.

We kid, of course – this football thing is a pretty big deal and even though EA announces its next game at the same time every year, this one can't help but feel more important thanks to the World Cup frenzy. There's a lot to prove, too – with Konami ready to send out the next generation of *PES*, this is the year where EA's franchise really has to deliver. As such, we're pleased to reveal that the sports game superpower is far from resting on its laurels, rather remodeling itself to offer an even closer approximation of the real deal.

One of the primary problems with *FIFA* in recent years has been the fact that loose balls have tended to ricochet off players like they were pinball bumpers, most likely a byproduct of the player impact physics. Don't expect to see such unrealistic bobbles in *FIFA 15*, though – there's a much more believable weight to the ball this year, and players seem far better at stopping it from pinging away at random when a challenge comes in. A well-judged tackle will more often than not let you take and keep the ball rather than bouncing it away for a playground scrum, while skilled dribblers may be able to hold onto the ball even after a sloppy tackle. The last few years have offered improved collision physics and even better ball flights – it's time for the grounded ball to be brought in line with the rest of the game.

As such, there are all kinds of changes to how the ball behaves. The amount of spin on it when struck will properly affect shot quality; different players will have their own individual animations for dribbling, making every challenge its own proposition; there seems to be less chance of perfect tackles sending loose balls to waiting attackers for a free shot on goal. It's not just the ball itself that behaves better either, as player interaction with it is massively improved as well. L2 while on the ball now allows you to shield it, leading to better defensive play and even the opportunity to run the clock down by taking the ball to the corner flag and parking the bus. It's hardly the

most sporting of tactics, nor will it be any fun at all to come up against. But it happens in the real game and since *FIFA*'s goal is to simulate the real sport, it makes sense that timewasting should exist in the game.

The other key area EA is looking to improve is atmosphere, an aspect that the team arguably already does better than most other sports devs. New to *FIFA 15* is emotion tracking for every player on the pitch – a player might get into a bit of a funk after conceding a weak goal or missing a sitter, while tempers can flare dynamically if the same two players continue to clash, rather than such confrontation simply being a stock cutscene that sometimes plays after a hard challenge. The crowd is similarly changeable and also has an impact on player performance, raising spirits with deafening support as you chase a late equaliser or losing faith in your side as you go four goals down

instead doing more to hold the line and let other players fall back to help clear the threat. The looping through ball isn't the win button it once was now that players are far better at holding position and anticipating such plays, and there are improvements at the other end as well. Attacking players make smarter runs to support you, especially when you go a goal down and everyone wants a hand in pulling level. Movement in general just feels more natural, although it'll take somewhat more extensive playtesting to see just how much of an impact player mentality really has on this side of the game – having disheartened defenders give up chasing the ball when trailing only stands to make matters worse, even if it is perhaps more realistic.

That's the biggest problem EA faces with improving *FIFA* – balancing realism and authenticity with making gameplay enjoyable is something that's

notoriously hard to do, but early impressions are promising. The sense of match day spectacle has always been one of the main things going for *FIFA* and that's been taken to the next level here, with many gameplay mechanics finally pulling in line with the

presentation. It's worth noting, though, that many of these improvements and additions are only possible on more powerful hardware – while the PS3 version will apparently be improved over last year's effort, purists will want to play on PS4 for the full effect of EA's focused efforts to deliver a bigger, better game of football. It's pretty clear from the World Cup game that we're well into diminishing returns territory on PS3 now, but there's loads more to be done with the new hardware and the impressive Ignite engine.

With *PES* finally arriving on PS4 this year, EA can no longer afford to be complacent – the Fox Engine is an amazing piece of tech and with Konami's games showing signs of recapturing the magic of the series' PS2 heyday, this stands to be the best clash in years. With improvements to just about every aspect of the game, though, EA couldn't be much better poised to defend its title. And while *FIFA 14* will see us through the World Cup just fine, the game has been spoiled for us by this early glimpse of the future, and we can't wait to see how the new season will unfold.

Luke Albigés

“LITTLE DETAILS LIKE TURF GETTING KICKED UP AFTER A TACKLE ARE INSANE”

at home. Match importance will also factor into this complex mess of emotions – players will go into a derby or a crucial cup tie way more fired up than they'd be for a regular league match, giving such important games a real sense of climax and occasion.

The game also looks noticeably prettier than last year's version, with EA clearly far more comfortable with the new Ignite engine than it was at launch. Player models have been entirely redone to make them look and feel more like their real world counterparts, while animation has been reworked as well in order to get away from the jarring transitions between canned animations and dynamic, physics-based player interactions we've seen in previous games. Little details like turf getting kicked up after a fierce sliding challenge are insane, but they're not just cosmetic – changes to the pitch surface can even impact the flow of the match, impeding a player's footing as they go to make a quick break or creating divots in the area that can turn a simple backpass into a keeper's worst nightmare.

Considering players can only ever be in control of one of 22 players, getting the AI right for the rest of the guys is absolutely crucial. Even after just a few games, we noticed that player awareness is hugely improved. The last man back will be far less keen to commit to a challenge and let his man through on goal, for instance,

This year's *FIFA* is currently receiving a dressing down from its manager after conceding too many corners last season. For more info, check out www.easports.com/uk/fifa

ANATOMY OF... THE INQUISITOR

BACK IN THE HOOD

Inquisition is set on the continent of Thedas, the same world as the first two games. We know you'll be revisiting Ferelden, the setting of *Origins*, but BioWare has kept quiet on whether the player will see any other old haunts. The team claimed that *Inquisition* would be set somewhere more 'French'.

WAR, BUT NOT PARTICULARLY CIVIL

Following events laid out in a couple of *Dragon Age* novels, a civil war has broken out in Orlais. On one side are the loyalists of the ruling Empress, and on the other a powerful noble faction led by her cousin, Grand Duke Gaspard. Simultaneously, the Circle of Magi has gone rogue, thanks in part to the events of *Dragon Age II*.

INQUIRING MINDS

You'll play as The Inquisitor, who travels the land righting wrongs and saving lives... that's the idea, anyway. Aside from that, as per usual in a BioWare RPG, the appearance and personality of The Inquisitor is largely up to you to decide. You'll be able to choose between Human, Elf, Dwarf or the more obscure Qunari, a first for the franchise.

"MATURE AND TASTEFUL"

It wouldn't be a BioWare game without romance, but *Inquisition* looks to be changing things up a bit. After the relationships of past games were criticised for lacking depth and believability, BioWare is promising to come at the topic with a more grown-up approach this time – and no, that doesn't mean more nudity.

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Dragon Age: Inquisition

PS4



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Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor

One does not simply... never mind, it's fine



ALSO COMING
TO PS3

IN THE WIDER world of gaming, it's usually a given that the lowliest enemies will act and look similar to each other. You only need to look at the popularity of the balaclava in first-person shooters and the number of palette swaps in your typical JRPG to know this to be true. But what if a developer challenged this convention by giving every enemy a distinctive appearance, a tangible set of strengths and weaknesses, and the potential to rise from the bottom to the leader of the pack? As it turns out, that's exactly what Monolith Productions is trying to achieve with *Shadow Of Mordor*.

The game takes the form of an open-world and action-focused RPG that's somewhat reminiscent of *Assassin's Creed*. It's set between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord Of The Rings* and casts the player as Talion, a Ranger of Gondor who was killed by Sauron's forces on the Black Gate before being resurrected by a mysterious Wraith. Understandably pissed,

Talion decides to use his newfound powers of ghostly persuasion – which appear to be a direct result of him merging with the Wraith – to build an army of Orcs by enslaving the ones that are loyal to Sauron in the treacherous lands of Mordor.

To achieve this, you have to get to grips with Talion's repertoire of Ranger and Wraith abilities in addition to the inventive Nemesis system. The sword, dagger and bow that Talion carries at all times can be used to stab an unsuspecting Orc in the back, nail one between the eyes and even parry their telegraphed strikes – Rocksteady-style – before countering with an attack of your own. But while the traditional methods are good for racking up the deaths and flashy decapitations, it's more prudent to beat an Orc into submission before making them a fully-fledged member of Team Talion.

The Nemesis system ties into a hierarchy screen that shows all the high-ranking Orcs in the region. The War Chiefs stand at the top of the food chain and are the leaders of their respective clans. To find out

where a War Chief is located and what his strengths and weaknesses are, you have to gain control of his captains and lieutenants, and the more middle-management Orcs you're able to ensnare before gunning for the top dog, the less one-sided the fight will be. It also pays to know whether a War Chief is immune to ranged attacks or enraged by fire before you go shooting him in the head with a burning arrow.

The nuances of the Nemesis system aren't so easy to explain in writing, but in our short time with the game, it was clear that each Orc has a distinct personality. There are so many games where the word "Orc", "Ogre" or "Troll" is associated with one generic character model, but by procedurally generating its green (or otherwise) skins from a wide range of variables – which includes swollen limbs, scarred faces and crude prosthetics – Monolith has made its Orcs seem much less like a footnote in a bestiary and more like a race of viscous yet highly diverse humanoids.



“IN OUR SHORT TIME WITH THE GAME, IT WAS CLEAR THAT EACH ORC HAS A DISTINCT PERSONALITY”



△○×□ To brand an enemy Orc and make him your own, you have to hold him for a few seconds without getting hit.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ The game will take place across the various regions of Mordor.
- The identity of the Wraith is a big mystery. Our guess is Isildur.
- × You can freely enter the Wraith world whenever you need to.
- Figure out what an Orc fears the most and you can send them running for the hills.

That’s exactly what Peter Jackson achieved in his film adaptations, and so long as *Shadow Of Mordor* matches the ambition of the Nemesis system with a story, world and combat system that doesn’t simply rely on the Tolkien legacy, but uses it as the foundation for something equally familiar and refreshing, then this could be the game that finally honours the fantasy king. It already looks fantastic running on the PlayStation 4 and we got a real kick out of fighting fire with fire by using a War Chief’s subordinates against him. So even though we know how the battle with Sauron will end, it seems that the real surprise could come courtesy of the humble Orc – once the poster-child of high-fantasy cannon fodder and now the unlikely basis for innovation.

Matt Edwards

SHADOW OF MORDOR is being beaten into shape by Monolith Productions. All the latest Middle-Earth news can be found at: www.shadowofmordor.com



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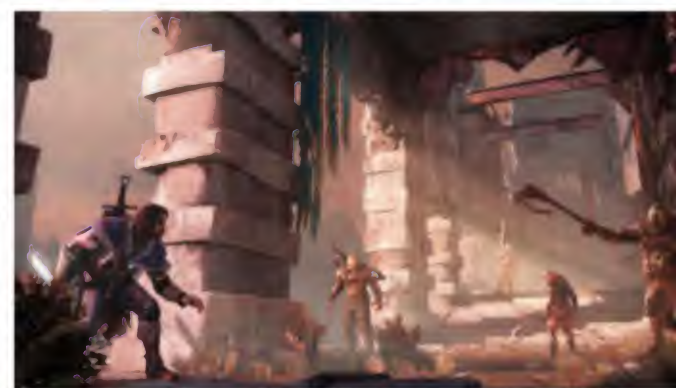


△○×□ He simply walked into Mordor...

ONE MAN ARMY

Taking matters into your own hands

Just because you can use a War Chief’s subordinates against him, doesn’t mean you have to. If you’re up for a challenge, you can break into the enemy stronghold and attempt to take the War Chief, his bodyguards and all the other Orcs down at once. Chances are you’ll get swarmed for your trouble, but if you pull it off, it’ll be a moment that’s worth remembering and sharing with the world.





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Driveclub

Has absence made the heart grow fonder?



GOOD THINGS

COME to those who wait. That is very much the message

coming from the mouth of *Driveclub* developer Evolution Studios. The racer had originally been planned as a PS4 launch title, but is now not due until this October – a delay totalling 11 long months.

The primary reason for the delay revolves around the desire to create a 'seamless experience', a game in which every element feeds into every other. Paul Rustchynsky, who took up the role of game director this past February, explains.

"[*Driveclub*] is a very ambitious, social and connected experience that's all about building a community of racers. Bringing people together within the game is an idea that must be seamlessly integrated. That's why we were delayed, the quality just wasn't there. It wasn't seamless. At the heart of the delay was the 'dynamic menu system', which is essential to all of the player's activities and this is the key area we've spent the extra time on to get right."

An 11-month delay in order to improve menu functionality will likely come as small consolation to racing game fans disappointed at not already having *Driveclub* running on their new console, but seeing it in action highlights the depth and complexity of the system. Essentially, the dynamic menus work as a social network of sorts aimed at constantly identifying new activities relevant to your playing style and skill level.

Every menu screen comes bundled with an 'activities' section filled with player-created challenges to complete, notifications on your friends' successes (and failures) and suggestions on which other players you might want to race against or clubs you might consider joining. Clicking on one of these notifications gives you the option of jumping straight into a relevant race with a view to beating another player's time or simply finding new friends.

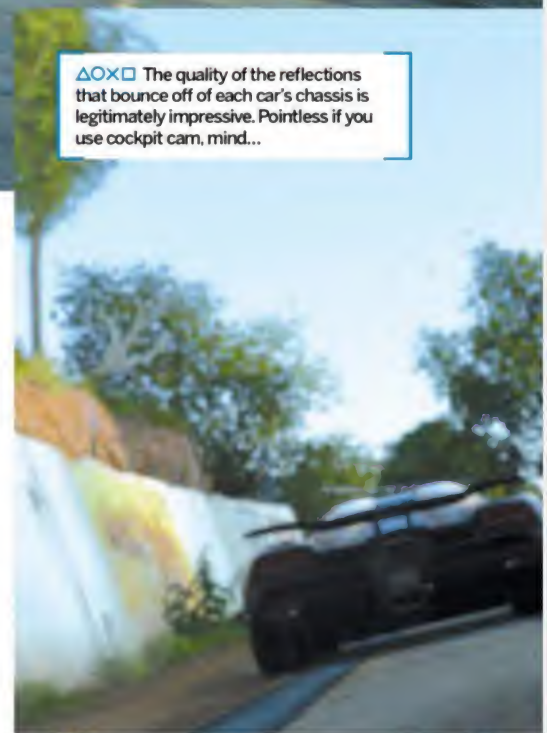
The idea is to create an environment in which it's painless to find something new to undertake, removing the typical event-to-event grind that can make progression a

chore in other racing games. "This is something that's always going on in the background," continues Rustchynsky. "It's always persistent and always giving you relevant information at the right time. Being connected in this way really matters in *Driveclub* – it enriches the experience and keeps everything fresh."

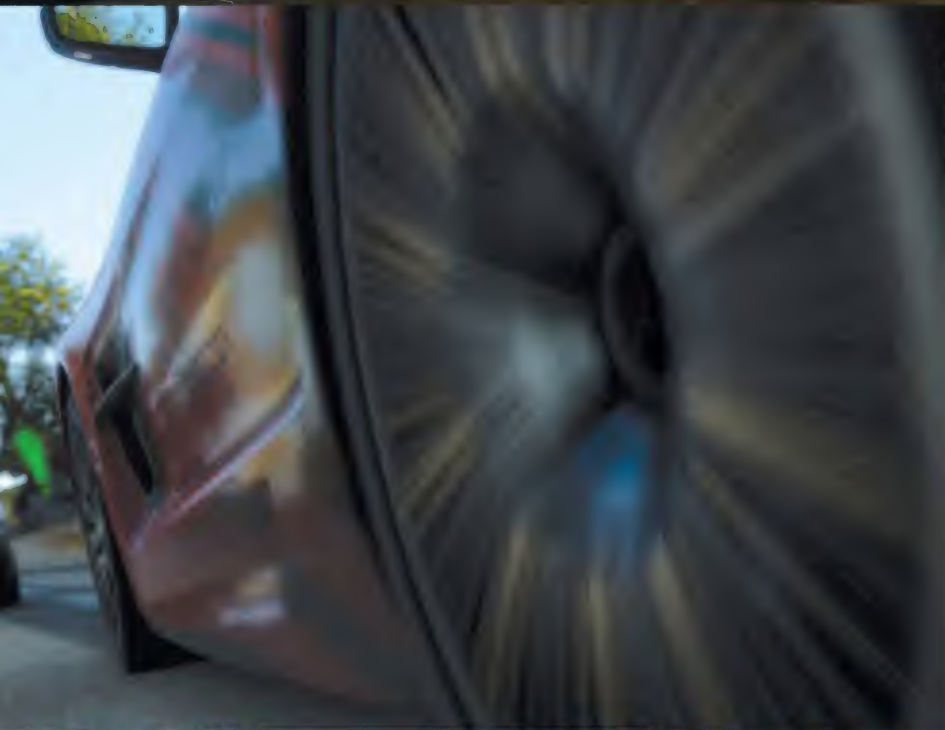
While the approach makes it easier for those people without *Driveclub*-playing friends to feel like they're part of the wider community, you're undoubtedly going to be missing out on a lot of the fun if you don't join a club. While the predictable sets of leaderboards ranking clubs by best lap times and number of wins are present and correct, the main goal of teaming up is to further increase that sense of connection and progress through the game as a unit.

Every act you perform in a race – from winning, to overtaking, to performing a clean drift – earns you 'Fame' (read: experience points). Fame levels up both you and your club, which in turn grants you access to new content such as cars and liveries. By not restricting progression

△○×□ The quality of the reflections that bounce off of each car's chassis is legitimately impressive. Pointless if you use cockpit cam, mind...



△××□ As it stands we've only raced a small selection of supercars. As a result, we have no idea how *Driveclub*'s smattering of smaller, less powerful cars will feel on track.



“YOU’RE UNDOUBTEDLY GOING TO BE MISSING OUT ON A LOT OF THE FUN IF YOU DON’T JOIN A CLUB”

solely to race performance, it’s easier for each racer to contribute to their club’s success.

“Being in a club matters, because it’s not always about being first. It’s about winning together,” Rustchynsky says. “Whether you’re good at drifting, or you’re good at driving the slower cars, you’ve got lots of ways to contribute to your club.

“There are *lots* of club accolades that you can earn that range from simply winning on certain tracks and racing certain cars to racing clean or being good at drifting. Everyone can contribute to these as a team, so I might go away for a week and when I come back the rest of my club will have earned more accolades and unlocked more cars for me to use straight away.”

As this progress is tied specifically to the performance of your club, leaving it means you also lose access to what it has unlocked. These rewards are never actually *yours*, they’re always the property of the club and its members.

“It’s important to stay in a club to get access to all of the game’s content,” Rustchynsky goes on to explain. “However, if you join a club that’s already at level 50 (the current maximum) then you will automatically have access to everything associated with that level. That means you can move between clubs without always having to worry about losing what you had previously unlocked with another group.”

If you don’t join a club then there will be content that you can never unlock, although Evolution seems to be being very careful to not entirely alienate players that have no interest in the social side.

“In terms of the 50 cars that are in the game right now, only five are specifically tied to club progression,” Rustchynsky states when asked about how lone players will be disadvantaged. “We want to make sure that players choosing to play solo, or players without a PSN connection, have access to almost everything that we’ve put in there.”



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The audio quality for each car is stunning. BMW and Mercedes were very impressed.
- Incredible visuals bring the game's five geographical areas to life.
- Integrated social connectivity means you always know what your friends are doing.
- Driver AI is adaptable. Any slip up by you is punished immediately.

BUILDING A CAR

Each of Driveclub's vehicles has been created with a level of detail that far exceeds that generally seen in other racing games. Here is a quick look at some of the more intricate elements...



REFRACTIVE LIGHTS

Any light hitting the lenses and reflectors of the car's lamps is refracted back into the environment. This includes the external light coming from the environment, as well as the internal source of the car's own bulbs.



SUN GLARE

Light from the sun reflects from both the car's hood and its interior, such as the panelling running along the sides of this Pagani. Any dirt or scratches on your windshield also influences this light, scattering it more haphazardly.



BRAKE GLOW

The glow of a brake disc is dynamically modelled to, we're told, accurately represent the precise heat generated during different degrees of braking. Further, that glow is reflected off both the wheel arch and wet roads.



12 TEXTURE LAYERS

12 layers are used to create the each car's final shine. Take a deep breath... they are: base metal, primer coating, base colour, two layers of metallic flakes, clear coating, dirt, chips, dents, scratches, cracks and ambience.

As it stands, clubs are limited to six members in a bid to create the feeling that you're a part of a close-knit group that intimately understands the tastes and abilities of those around you. Rustchynsky did say, however, that that number could potentially be increased based on future player feedback.

Within this social framework there is actually a game to play, one that doesn't fall easily into either the 'arcade' or 'simulation' brackets usually applied to racers. To coin a phrase, perhaps the best description is one of 'accessible realism' – cars that share characteristics with their real-life counterparts, but come assigned with a host of tweaks that make them easier to drive.

This approach is most obvious in how braking and handling operate, both being far more responsive than what is currently possible in reality (with the possible exception of an F1 car). As a result, you're free to make a number of mistakes – misjudging braking distance or missing a corner's apex, for example – without completely ruining your race. However, in our experience of ten-ish races so far, such mistakes will cost you a place on the podium thanks to AI drivers that are in no way shy of taking advantage of your failure.

"We didn't want the AI to simply race together along a formulaic path – we want it to mimic what



ΔΟΧΔ We've talked about how great it looks, but stills don't do the game justice. In motion, it's stunning.

happens in real racing," Rustchynsky tell us. "In *MotorStorm* we had huge packs of cars all racing against one another in a tight group and we've got a lot of that behaviour in *Driveclub*.

"That means cars will aggressively try to overtake, they will brake very late into corners and they're constantly looking for an advantage by drafting behind you whenever they can."

Drafting is made easier or more difficult depending on the kind of track you're racing on. Point-to-point races seem to feature longer straights and provide more opportunity to tuck in behind an opponent, while lap-based circuits (both those set on streets and race tracks) are more concerned with testing your cornering discipline and ability.

While this variety is welcome, it's the visual quality of these environments that truly steals the show. Again, Rustchynsky is keen to promote this success as a direct result of *Driveclub*'s delay.

"We've spent a lot of extra time with the worlds, which are some of the densest and most dynamic locations you'll see in a racing game. [We have] Scotland, Chile, Canada, Norway and India in the game and that gives us a great variety across a total of 55 different race courses.

"Each location is populated with vegetation, crowds, banners and other animated objects. We

"WE DIDN'T WANT THE AI TO SIMPLY RACE ALONG A FORMULAIC PATH"

want to make sure that there's always something going on so that the tracks feel alive all the time.

"It's all delivered in 1080p and 30fps. We choose 30fps in the end because it allowed us to deliver more detail on the cars, to push the audio and has given us the capability to deliver worlds that look *that* good. There are no shortcuts, like 2D crowds or anything like that – everything is dynamic."

More impressive is the dynamic approach to time and weather that sees conditions in a race change over time. Winds, that blow up to 100mph, cause trees to bend and overhead power lines to shake. The sun setting and the moon rising triggers trackside lighting to power up, drastically changing the makeup of shadows which affect your visibility. Clouds, influenced by the wind, move across the sky – sometimes blotting out the sun, sometimes bringing rain.

Quite brilliantly, you can shorten the length of a day to allow you to see just how dramatic of an effect such changes represent without having to race constantly for 24 hours on the same piece of road. It also allows you to view much more readily

the subtle effects of shadows changing position as the sun moves across the sky, or how violently flags flutter in relation to wind speed.

With four months until *Driveclub* is (finally) due to hit shelves, it's possible that the finished product will look even better. Fancy graphics, though, are not enough on their own.

For the delay to be forgiven, *Driveclub* is going to have to excel in all areas. In particular, it's essential that the social connectivity tying everything together lives up to its goal of having every player feel as though they're part of something bigger than themselves. If that fails, everything else will feel incomplete.

What we've seen so far has been really impressive, though. The extra development seems to have been well spent and, as a result, our expectations are as lofty as they could possibly be. No pressure, then.

John Robertson

DRIVECLUB is being manufactured by Evolution Studios. Check out www.driveclub.com for more specs

Soma

Under the sea, that's the place for me



HORROR IS AN acquired taste. Not everyone enjoys being scared: the rise in adrenaline, the lump in your throat, the foreboding sense that something terrible lies ahead but you must push on regardless. For some weird reason, not everyone is into it (we don't understand why) and those people should probably never play *Soma*. Consider something more sedate, like riding rollercoasters professionally.

Soma comes from Frictional Games, the horror masters behind the modern masterpiece *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*. Gamers who have been strictly PlayStation the last few years have been missing out, as the PC exclusive is easily the scariest game we've ever played. The recent wave of first-person horror games like *Outlast*, *Daylight* and *Alien: Isolation* can be attributed almost entirely to the success of *Amnesia* and its predecessor, the *Penumbra* series. The concept of not being able to defend yourself and having to flee was novel at the time, especially in an era of games like *Dead Space* making horror less scary than ever.

Soma appears to be beating a similar drum, which is fine when that drum plays such sweet music. We know it's a first-person horror game, but otherwise we don't know much about the gameplay. Considering the success Frictional has had so far, we'd wager that you once again can't defend yourself from the creatures that stalk you – just the way we like it.

Set on board the PATHOS-2 research station, for a while the world assumed that *Soma* was set in space. Not so: a recent trailer revealed that this futuristic facility is in fact underwater, at the bottom of a deep, dark ocean. So much changes, but the isolation of the crew remains the same. The radios are out, and the few that remain are truly alone.

The plot of *Soma* involves machines that begin to take on human characteristics and alien constructions that have started to "interfere with routine". Obviously, Frictional doesn't want to give too much away, but something has clearly gone very, very wrong. "The only way out is to do something unimaginable," reads the brief description. We can't wait.

The new sci-fi setting offers a ton of new potential for Frictional, a stark contrast to the gothic castle and dungeons of *Amnesia*. With a quote from esteemed sci-fi author Phillip K Dick on the *Soma* website, the team is clearly taking influence from

a number of sources – the dark, biomechanical machinery is like an HR Giger fever dream.

It's not all just indoors however, and a lot of the game will take place out in the water, the player wearing a creaking diving suit as they slowly wade between outposts. The tons of water crushing down on you and the lack of light lead to a total lack of visibility, only being able to see a few feet in front of you while your claustrophobic suit struggles and shudders under the pressure. The atmosphere is incredible, and scary enough without even considering what is out there in the inky blackness.

With little information to go on, the combination of developer and setting alone is enough to excite us for the potential of *Soma*. This could end up being the scariest game we've ever played, and that's exactly what we want it to be.

Sam Smith

SOMA is being developed by Frictional Games. Check the website for more details:
www.somagame.com

"THE DARK, BIOMECHANICAL MACHINERY IS LIKE AN HR GIGER FEVER DREAM"



△OX□ We are yet to confirm as to whether the game is inspired by seminal shark-fest *Deep Blue Sea*.

△OX□ As long as there isn't a plot twist involving evil mermaids, we'll be okay.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



From the makers of the scariest game we've ever played.



A dark, isolated undersea setting that looks right scary.



Frictional Games' first foray onto console! It's about time...



Puts other 'horror' games like *Dead Space* to shame.



Nobody creates atmosphere as well as Frictional Games.



ORIGINAL IS BEST

Long before *World Of Warcraft* revolutionised the MMORPG genre, *EverQuest* was providing millions with a fantasy world in which to quest, loot and live. While the series has lost its lustre since, Sony is hoping welcome millions more into the fold with the exciting *EverQuest Next*. This is the most original, groundbreaking (literally) MMO since *WOW*, and could do huge things for a genre in need of another boost.

DEEP DOWN

Digging down into the earth will reveal procedurally generated dungeons, caverns and chasms full of dangerous monsters and amazing treasures. The thrill of exploration never gets old, and simply going for a spelunk and seeing what you find will give *EverQuest Next* a huge amount of replay potential, without even touching on actual quests and missions. It's basically a 3D, online *Terraria*. Amazing.

MAKE YOUR MARK

The game also supports the add-on *EverQuest Next: Landmark* software. *Landmark* is all about creation, allowing players to stake out a claim on the world and build whatever they like, from a huge tower that looks like a penis to an amazing castle, or just a little wood hut to spend their days in. Players will be able to sell their creations, and Sony has said it will use the best in the actual game.

A WORLD OF WAR AND CRAFTING

The most exciting new feature of *EverQuest Next* is the world itself. Made up of millions of voxels, EQN will feature destructible terrain that can be broken down and reshaped as you choose. Sony has essentially taken *Minecraft* and stuck an MMORPG on top of it, and the result is just as awesome and free time destroying as you might think. Seeing your spells destroy the scenery is a great feeling.

NO KEYBOARD REQUIRED

Considering that it's made by Sony, perhaps it isn't surprising that *EverQuest Next* is being developed concurrently for both PC and PS4. While many would argue that an MMORPG belongs on a PC, controlled with a mouse and keyboard, more and more examples of the genre are making the jump to console successfully. *EverQuest Next* is being designed to work just as well on a pad as it does on a keyboard, and PS4 could end up being the best platform to play the game on.

SHOULD ALL MMOS BE FREE-TO-PLAY?



EverQuest Next will be free-to-play, continuing the trend that most new MMOs seem to be following: free-to-play, supported with micro-transactions and premium subscription models for the most hardcore. The best games that implement this method will have players purchasing extra content packs, cosmetic options for their characters or other things that don't affect the core balance of the game at all. By avoiding the 'pay-to-win' trap, games can remain in players' good graces and maybe encourage them to pony up a bit of scratch.



However, a number of MMOs are still sticking with the more old-school subscription method. *The Elder Scrolls Online* will need a subscription, *Final Fantasy XIV* requires one and *World Of Warcraft* is still going strong on PC with an £8.99 per month charge. Gamers who already enjoy MMOs might not mind starting another game with a subscription, but the paywall acts as a barrier to interested players who might want to dip in and try things out. A lot of these games offer a free first month, but you still have to input your payment information to access it.



We've seen games in the past start out with a subscription and quickly turn to free to play when revenue started to dry up, to great success – *DC Universe Online* is a perfect example of this. To us, it seems like free-to-play is the way forward for MMOs, especially if developers can balance it well enough that spending money never gives you an unfair competitive advantage.

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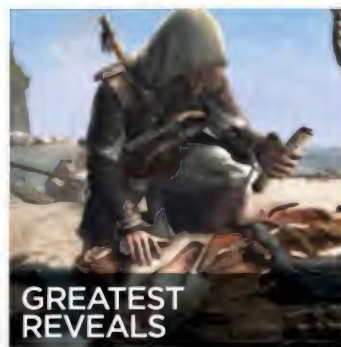
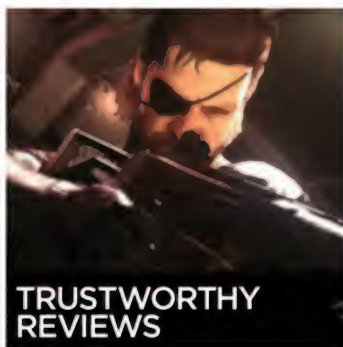
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"THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTING GLORIOUS SUSSEX AND TAKING OVER SHROPSHIRE IS A WONDERFUL ONE"

ETA Q4 2014

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Freedom Wars

ONE MILLION YEARS DUNGEON!



MONSTER HUNTER IS arguably the biggest handheld franchise in Japan right now, spawning an entirely new 'boss hunt' genre of its own in a similar manner to the *Doom* clones of the early Nineties. These 'MonHan Clones' are big business on Vita, as mainline *Monster Hunter* releases are exclusive to 3DS for some reason. Probably money.

Sony is finally throwing its own hat in the ring with *Freedom Wars*, an interesting sci-fi take on the formula. Set in a dystopian future, the surface of the Earth has been destroyed and is no longer capable of supporting life. Humanity is forced to live underground and overpopulation has become an enormous issue. A drastic measure is implemented to combat this: anyone arrested for any crime is immediately found guilty, regardless of evidence. Forced to live in enormous prison cities that are infested with monsters known as Abductors, every prisoner is given the same sentence: a million years. Killing a monster reduces your sentence, and it's theoretically possible to eventually earn your freedom with enough kills. Players control a protagonist who has been imprisoned since birth, given a million-year sentence 'for the crime of living'. Seems a bit unfair.

It's an absurd premise, but an interesting one, and substantially different to the standard fantasy setup

of most similar games. More focus on narrative could provide a greater impetus to keep playing for gamers who struggle to get motivated through gameplay alone, and should provide some audience crossover for fans of JRPGs and adventure games.

Gameplay seems to be a mixture of standard *Monster Hunter* with an emphasis on third-person shooting and RPG elements. You'll be equipped with a whip called the Thorn which seems functionally similar to the grapple from *Just Cause 2* – this can be used to zip about the battlefield as well as pull monsters down to your level. Dashing about the map with ease gives the game a more 3D, vertical feeling than other boss hunting titles, as you can easily zip up and smack a huge monster right in its ugly face rather than chipping away at its ankles.

To ease your considerable burden, you'll be able to hire android partners known as Accessories. These guys are just as customisable as your main character, so if you want an angry, six-foot tall robot schoolgirl backing you up, go right ahead.

You'll be able to equip any two of a variety of weapons, while your Accessory is limited to one. There's a large selection to choose from, grouped into six main categories: small sword, large sword, spear, personal firearms, multipurpose firearms and support firearms. Your choice of weapon will

greatly affect the way you play and your role in combat, from dealing huge damage up front to supporting your allies with buffs and abilities.

Freedom Wars features an interesting take on multiplayer in Japan, with players divided up into 47 'Panopticon' prison cities, each representing one of Japan's 47 prefectures. Players fight among themselves for the glory of both their virtual Panopticon and real-life home county, with the possibility of taking over rival prefectures for rewards and glory. We doubt this feature will translate over to our shores – a shame, as the concept of representing glorious Sussex and taking over Shropshire is a wonderful one.

Coming from Sony's esteemed Japan Studio, in the war of *Monster Hunter*-likes *Freedom Wars* seems to be doing the most new things, stretching this burgeoning genre in new and exciting ways. The game is out in Japan any day now – a European launch is still unconfirmed, but we doubt it will be too long now. Could this be the one that finally makes us forget about *Monster Hunter*?

Sam Smith

FREEDOM WARS is currently behind bars over at SCE Japan Studio. Check the website for more details: www.jp.playstation.com/scej/title/freedomwars



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△○×□ Looking remarkably good for a Vita game, *Freedom Wars* no doubt benefits from being developed in-house, exclusively for the platform.

- △ Like *Monster Hunter*, but set in a dystopian future with massive guns!
- It's a PS Vita exclusive, so you won't see it anywhere else.
- × An intriguing multiplayer mode based on taking over rival players' cities.
- Fully customisable player-character and companions.

HUNTING MONSTERS

Monster Hunter is big business, and there's a wealth of similar games on Sony handhelds...

TOUKIDEN

Developed by Omega Force, *Toukiden* is best described as "Dynasty Warriors meets *Monster Hunter*", and is every bit as awesome as that sounds.

PHANTASY STAR PORTABLE 2

The PSP-exclusive *Phantasy Star Portable* games take a more boss rush-oriented approach to the classic *PSO* template, with a larger focus on weapon crafting.

SOUL SACRIFICE

With a concept by *Mega Man* creator Keiji Inafune, *Soul Sacrifice* was Sony's first stab at the genre, and a pretty darn good one at that. Update *Delta* is even better.

GOD EATER

The closest in tone to *Freedom Wars*, again set in a strange future with more scientific takes on the classic giant sword weapon archetypes.



△○×□ Teaming up with others online to take down huge bosses is already a staple of this genre.

ANATOMY OF... THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE (FROM THE ORDER: 1886)

PRIMAL RAGE

In the strange alternate history of *The Order*, a small number of humans took on bestial traits around the 7th Century. War broke out between humans and these new half-breeds, and despite humans having the numerical advantage, the strength of the half-breeds gave them the upper hand in centuries of conflict. Can't we all just get along?

The new action game from Ready At Dawn features an honourable band of knights facing off against half-breed monsters in a smoggy, steampunk London. But who are these people you'll be controlling?

ALTERNATE HISTORY

Centuries passed before humanity found new hope in King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Arthur and his crew led the fight against the half-breeds and discovered 'Black Water', a mystical liquid that extends human life and bestows remarkable healing abilities. This along with the industrial revolution turns the tide of the war.

OLD NAMES, NEW FACES

We jump forward again to 1886, where the war still continues. Humans have the advantage, but a new threat emerges with the rebellion of the oppressed lower classes. Our squad of four knights support the upper classes, at least as the game begins. We wouldn't be surprised if they learn the error of their ways at some point.

FANTASTIC FOUR

Grayson's team includes Sebastian Mallory, who bears the name of Sir Percival, and Isabeau D'Argyll, the newest Lady Igraine. All three are older than they seem, having battled the half-breeds for of years. The final team member is Marquis de Lafayette, who does not bear the name of a knight, as he is an apprentice.

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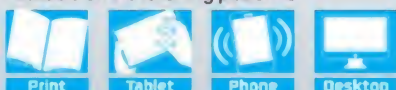


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PREVIEW ROUND-UP



Some games came out ages ago, others are about to be released and some are miles off. Here, you'll find a selection of games from the latter two categories, but which will be next to join your collection?

PS3



TALES FROM THE BORDERLANDS

TELLTALE CONTINUES ITS campaign of world domination with *another* episodic series based on a famous franchise – this time it's *Borderlands*. *Tales From The Borderlands* seems like it will play in a similar manner to Telltale's other games, a story-based adventure with puzzle solving and plenty of branching dialogue options. Set after *Borderlands 2*, you'll control two protagonists who eventually meet up and explore a post-Handsome Jack era Pandora.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

PS4



ALSO COMING TO: PS3

GUILTY GEAR XRD –SIGN–

WE STILL REMEMBER

the first time we saw *Guilty Gear Xrd* in action, and were convinced it was a 2D game. Then the action paused, the camera panned out around the fighters and we realised that this beautiful 2D game was in fact three-dimensional. You really need to see it in

action to get the full effect, but it's been a long time since a game's visuals impressed us in the same way as *Guilty Gear Xrd*. It's been out in Japanese arcades for a while now, and a console release is still on the way later this year, hopefully with a selection of new fighters to sweeten the deal.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

PS4



BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT

THIS OCTOBER WILL mark the end of the *Arkham Trilogy* with a PS4 adventure through a villain-infested Gotham. With the Batmobile finally available, a huge open world and numerous classic and original bad guys to take down, Rocksteady is clearly planning to go out with a bang. But while it's planned as the last in the trilogy, will Warner really be willing to let the series go so easily? We imagine that it makes far too much money...

RELEASE DATE: 14 OCTOBER

PS4



H1Z1

FANS HAVE WANTED *DayZ* to come to consoles for ages, so Sony seems to have taken the initiative and made its own version. Where *H1Z1* will differ is an emphasis on crafting, with players building shelters and more that will remain present in the world... unless someone destroys it. As usual, while zombies pose a constant background threat, it's other players that are the real danger. The game will be free-to-play, supported by limited microtransactions, and will launch on both PS4 and PC later this year.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2014

PS4



MIRROR'S EDGE 2

THE FIRST MIRROR'S *Edge* had some major flaws that many were unable to overlook. It also had some wonderful ideas and great free-running mechanics that, when it all came together, created a fun, pure experience. Hopefully the sequel can deliver more of that while shedding the issues of the first game (seriously, no more guns). Coming exclusively to the new generation of consoles, the stark colour palette of the game's dystopian future should look better than ever in glorious 1080p.

RELEASE DATE: 2015



ALSO COMING TO: PS3

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

THE FACT THAT *Ground Zeroes* was so good was both a blessing and a curse, as the wait for *The Phantom Pain* gets harder by the day. There are only so many times we can watch the nine-minute red band trailer before we need something else to satiate our appetites. *The Phantom Pain* is going to take the open-world stealth that Kojima introduced in *Ground Zeroes* and blow it wide open. At the end of the day, *Metal Gear Solid* is always worth the wait.

RELEASE DATE: 2015



PROJECT CARS

SURE, NEED FOR *Speed Rivals* looks good, and yes, *Driveclub* is a very pretty game, but compared to *Project CARS* nothing even comes close. Developed by the team behind the *Need For Speed: Shift* games, *Project CARS* will be a realistic driving simulator in the style of *Gran Turismo* and *Forza*. But you don't care about that – the reason the game has everyone's attention is how good it looks. Despite our disbelief, the PS4 version will apparently look as realistic as the prototype running on PC.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER



ALSO COMING TO: PS3

SKYLANDERS: TRAP TEAM

THE BEST WAY to make money these days is apparently by flogging pieces of plastic to small children. Actually, that's been a good way to make money for a long time, but having the toys unlock characters in a game was a masterstroke that Activision has been riding ever since. *Trap Team* seems to be taking a few cues from *Pokémon*, as you can now capture enemy bosses and then use them as playable characters. Wallets at the ready, people.

RELEASE DATE: 10 OCTOBER



FINAL FANTASY XV

THE FRESH PRINCE of Lucis, our floppy-haired hero Noctis, has a world to save in a tale involving crystals, dragons and giant swords – yep, it's definitely a *Final Fantasy* game. Considering it was first announced as *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* in 2006, this is a game that has been in gestation for a very long time, and while more development time sounds like a good thing, it often instead hurts the product. Add in the recent string of divisive *Final Fantasy* games and XV has a huge task on its hands.

RELEASE DATE: 2015

Battles seem as action-heavy as in *Lightning Returns*, although this is still an RPG at heart. Noctis can teleport about using his magical swords, although how extensively this ability will be used in actual battles remains to be seen. One thing that can't be denied is how good it all looks. *Final Fantasy* has a reputation for pushing each console to its limits, and that's clearly still the case. But can Square Enix balance the need for change with the fans' desire for a classic JRPG experience? Time will tell...



ALSO COMING TO: PS3

DISNEY INFINITY 2.0: MARVEL SUPER HEROES

HERE IT IS: the next version of *Disney Infinity* will feature a bunch of characters from Marvel Comics, including Iron Man, Captain America and everyone's favourite quite good archer, Hawkeye. It's the same deal as last time (*Skylanders* with a creative slant), with a base that you place collectable figures on to play as them in-game. Parents hate it, kids love it, we are now far more interested than we were before and it's going to make an absolute fortune.

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

SKYRIM WAS JUST THE STARTER

"IT'S UP TO YOU TO DECIDE IF THE FIRST TWO GAMES WERE NICHE OR NOT"



Bound By Flame may have been the first RPG on PS4, but those in the know understand that the first must-have PS4 RPG is CD Projekt RED's *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, coming early next year. It's been in development for approximately *forever*, and the fact it is coming to consoles as well as PC might have something to do with that, according to level designer Miles Tost.

"I think the simplest, and yet most accurate, answer would be that we needed to triple everything," says Tost, when asked about developing *Wild Hunt* compared to its predecessor. "We have had to work three times as much as we did on *The Witcher 2*. This is what happens when you have more than one platform in mind!"

Of course, *Wild Hunt* isn't actually CDPR's first trip to the console battlefield. *The Witcher 2: Assassins Of Kings* was originally a PC exclusive, but an Xbox 360 port followed a few months later. The port was a surprising accomplishment considering the size of the game, but was still inherently flawed, with myriad performance issues, awkward controls and a whole bunch of bugs. It was an excellent try for a developer with no prior console experience, and opened up the series to a whole new audience, but there was quite clearly still room for improvement.

"Since porting *Assassins Of Kings* to the 360 was our first attempt at

developing on consoles," says Tost, "I think the most important thing we got from the process was learning how to develop and publish games on consoles. There's a lot of under-the-hood stuff you don't know when you do PC-only games (such as certification), and a lot of perceptual and design things like adjusting the interface for a console controller. All this experience is being used to make *Wild Hunt* a really awesome game."

The amount of attention *The Witcher 3* has garnered has been particularly surprising, considering the relatively niche appeal of the first two games. The first *Witcher* was PC only, and while the second had a 360 port, hardcore RPGs don't tend to have a huge amount of mass-market appeal. Still, *Wild Hunt* has got gamers the world over clamouring for its release, including many PlayStation fans who have never even played the series before. Is it the new open-world approach attracting new interest, the beautiful graphics or simply the fact the game is now on more platforms?

According to Tost, it's more a matter of the studio having proved itself as capable in the RPG field.

"It's up to you to decide if the first two games were niche or not, but I think *The Witcher 3* got that much attention because we've made two really good games in the past. I mean, the



△○×□ We recommend trying to play the first two *Witcher* games if you can, but it isn't necessary. Still, they are great games, so give it your best shot.



Metascore speaks volumes. We are working hard for that attention and I hope everyone sees that work, and thinks somewhere deep inside that we deserve it."

Tost elaborates on why exactly he thinks the series has built a hardcore fanbase. As well as the excellent Western RPG gameplay and beautiful graphics, the most lauded element of *The Witcher* games tends to be their mature, adult approach to storytelling.

"I think it's the maturity and the way we approach fans of the genre. I mean, we're all grown up here, and some games still tend to treat people like they're children. Choices are shallow, consequences are none. We've made something different in this regard, there's no black and white here, only grey. Geralt is not the good guy, he's a guy. He's a troubleshooter, he fixes stuff – he's not a knight in shining armour. People dig that."

Fans of the first two games will be able to attest to this. While many games have simple morality systems with a good choice and an evil one, *The Witcher* games offer no such black and white, binary choices, and will often make you decide between two options that seem equally unpleasant. It's not always fun in the traditional sense, but just as Tost says, this is not a game for



△OX□ Between *Dark Souls*, *The Witcher* and *Lords Of The Fallen*, it seems that miserable is the new cool.

children: the real world is a cruel, unfair place, and the world of *The Witcher* is one of the few videogame settings to truly reflect that.

That said, there is sometimes a thin line between being mature and being vulgar and gratuitous for the sake of shock value and being adult. Tost says the balancing act is difficult, but one that his studio has a firm grasp on.

"The most crucial aspect is taste. Being vulgar or obscene for the sake of being vulgar or obscene is not the way to go. Everything should have a cause and lead to something. And this is what drives the in-game world. We're vulgar because the world the game is set in is brutal and the characters that live there show almost no mercy. There's not much room for being nice if you can die any day. I think that when you put things like this in a broad perspective, people see why you did what you did."

Community manager Marcin Momot gave us some examples of the types of difficult choices you'll be forced to make. There is no good and bad here, just deciding which is the lesser of two evils.

"Look at the previous games of the series. Terrorism versus freedom fighting, the atrocities



△OX□ CDPR is promising big changes to the combat system in *Wild Hunt* to make it more suitable for a console control scheme. Good news.

BIGGER THAN SKYRIM (AND THEN SOME)

While initial estimates had *The Witcher 3*'s map clocking in at around 20 per cent bigger than that of *Skyrim*, figures that have come out since have dwarfed that initial expectation.

The sizes of two areas of *Wild Hunt* have been revealed, with the city of Novigrad measuring 72.25 square km and the land of Skellige coming in at 64 square km. The two together measure 136.25 square km or slightly more than 52 square miles, which is enormous when you consider the entirety of *Skyrim*'s map was 14.8 square miles.

This means that you could fit all of *Skyrim* over three and a half times into these two areas of *Wild Hunt* alone. Considering these are but two areas of a larger world, the statistic seems incredible, even hard to believe. Can *Wild Hunt* really be this enormous, and if so, can it be full of interesting things to do? Only time will tell...

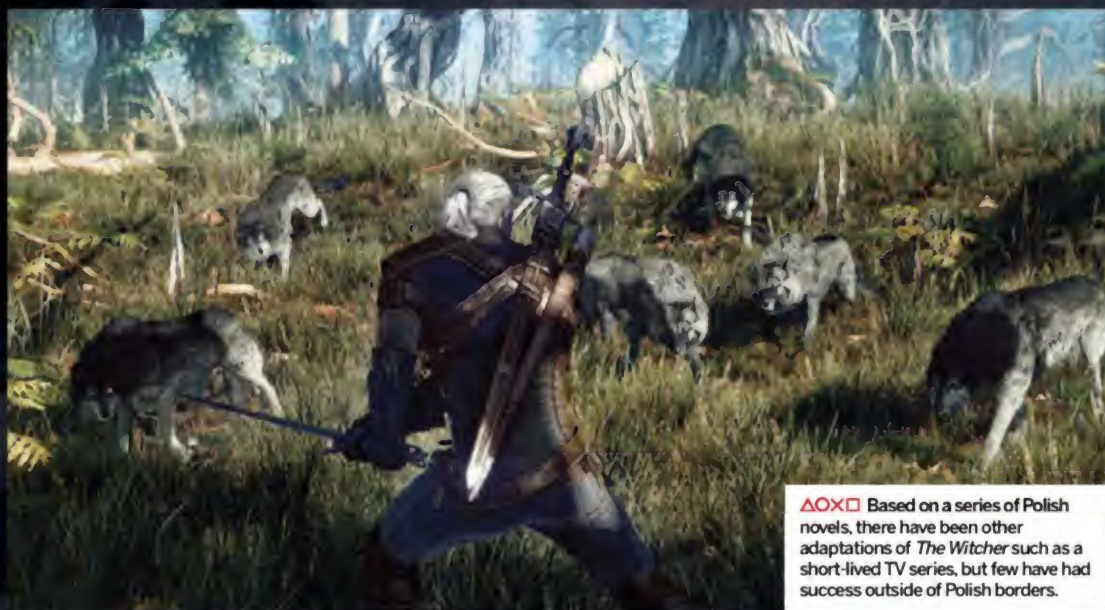


of war, politics, assassinations because of politics, famine, racism and social inequality... we tackle a lot of real-world themes through this fantasy lens. And you get to choose, you get to shape it all, either directly or indirectly. Choose this, someone will die; choose differently, and some other person dies. There are no easy decisions in the game, and every decision carries weight. *The Witcher* was always like that. It's what constitutes the mature approach towards gamers we have."

While many PlayStation 4 owners might be looking forward to *The Witcher 3*, the unfortunate fact remains that a large number of them will not have played either of the preceding games. Tost insists that that won't be a problem.

"*Wild Hunt* is written in such a way so you don't have to play the previous games to have fun. That doesn't mean we're disregarding all the choices and consequences from previous games, it means that we managed to write the story in such a way that newcomers will treat it as something new, and fans of the series will feel right at home, as the game picks up where *Assassins Of Kings* ended."

The story is the third and final part in the trilogy of Geralt Of Rivia, the titular Witcher. Witchers are monster hunters who undergo rigorous training as well as genetic modification from a young age. This results in Geralt's albinism, a sign of his nature that leads to ostracism by others. With his enhanced physical



△OX□ Based on a series of Polish novels, there have been other adaptations of *The Witcher* such as a short-lived TV series, but few have had success outside of Polish borders.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

With *The Witcher* and *Cyberpunk 2077*, CDPR seems adept at putting its own spin on existing franchises. If the team ever needs a new project, may we put forward a few suggestions of our own...



GAME OF THRONES

Forget the rubbish game from a couple of years ago and imagine what CDPR could do with the *Game Of Thrones/Song Of Ice And Fire* licence. Books famous for building a dark, gritty world where life is constantly unfair sounds like perfect source material.



STAR WARS

Sure, it's a total pipe dream: the tone of a CDPR game is far more mature and gritty than the black/white morality of the Jedi and Sith. Still, *Knights Of The Old Republic* is one of the best games of all time, and we would love another *Star Wars* RPG up to the same standard.



ALIEN

A good *Alien* RPG is one of our dreams, and if any studio could make it happen, CDPR is the one. It would ideally lean toward a more real-time, action-based combat style than a turn-based one, but as this is CDPR's speciality there should be nothing to worry about.



CRASH BANDICOOT

Crash has long needed a reboot, and what better way than to recast him in a world that hates human/animal hybrids? Shunned by society, Crash has no choice but to rise up and take down 'The Machine', run by Neo Cortex (this is a joke, please don't actually do this).

"YOU MIGHT SAY THAT, IN A WAY, EVERYTHING IS BOTH COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE AT THE SAME TIME. SCHRÖDINGER WOULD BE PROUD"

abilities and magical powers, Geralt travels the land, carrying out his duties as a monster hunter for hire while trying to remain separate from the more petty human issues that surround him. Of course, as with any good hero, this tends to go awry, as the guy is in possession of more emotions than he admits.

The third chapter of his story begins with a mysterious army known as the Wild Hunt invading the northern kingdoms, stealing children and leaving death and destruction in its wake. Long considered to be nothing more than an ancient tale, the Wild Hunt is very real, and worse: it seems to be directly focused on targeting Geralt. Poor guy can't catch a break.

Originally slated for this year, *Wild Hunt* was pushed back to early 2015 to give CDPR more time. Momot explains the reasoning behind the decision.

"Polishing the game. That was our main thought when we decided to postpone the launch. I mean, we probably could release the game in the original release window, but it wouldn't represent the quality we're after. Seriously, we do believe in the 'it's ready when it's done' motto, and it's not a PR stunt. In the long run, in a year or two, no one will remember that the game was released a few months later, but we do hope that everyone will remember how awesome it is.

"Developing a game is a very fragmented process and certain aspects of the game can't be finished



before others, which, in turn, can't be finished before something else is finished, and... you get my point. It's not like we've made the sound and it's just sitting there on a hard drive, waiting for the characters to be finished, so you can rig everything. Since we're polishing the game now, you might say that, in a way, everything is both complete and incomplete at the same time. Schrödinger would be proud."

If it sounds like a ton of work, it's with good reason. *The Witcher 3* promises an open world even bigger than *Skyrim*, with hundreds of hours of content planned. We asked Momot how exactly the team goes about writing such a huge amount of content, making sure every element is equally compelling.

"Okay, this might sound a bit unimpressive, but... we sit down, think, and start writing. A lot. Then we talk, we see if it works, and write, a lot, again. Then again, remember that the game is not composed of *scenes*. The core of the gameplay is story-driven, yes, but a ton of what you'll see on-screen is powered by your actions. Remember, this is a fully open-world game – you can go anywhere."

When asked how the team avoids repetition in

side-quests, Momot's answer is simple. "We just don't repeat quests. Everything is handcrafted and there's no automatic quest generator in the studio (although some people in quest design/story departments could have a nickname like that). We try to make everything as unique as we can."

The concept of every single quest, both the main story thread and small side missions, being entirely handcrafted and unique is a fascinating and incredibly ambitious one that helps explain just why the game is taking so long to develop. According to Momot, it's been a tough process, but a very worthwhile one.

"It's a very individual thing, as everyone on the team learns something different during development. As a studio, I think we've learned much on how to release a multi-platform RPG on new-gen consoles. Being a pioneer is hard, but the final effect will speak for itself."

Once *The Witcher 3* is released, the team at CDPR will focus on its other ongoing project *Cyberpunk 2077*, although when we asked Tost if the studio would all focus on *Cyberpunk* or remain on two games, his answer was simple: "Wait and see!" With one excellent game almost out the door and another in the oven, the future is looking bright for CD Projekt RED as well as RPG fans. Well, maybe bright is the wrong word. The future is looking bleak, realistic and coloured in shades of grey... and that's exactly how we like it.



TOP TEN WEIRDEST VITA GAMES



MONSTER MONPIECE

JUST HOW OFFENSIVE can a card-battling RPG actually be? Well, this game is infamous for one feature in particular. In order to unlock the full power of these magical girls, the player must grip the Vita firmly before... rubbing both sides of it up and down to remove the girl's clothes and unleash their full potential. That's right, *Monster Monpiece* makes you, erm... stimulate your Vita to strip girls of questionable age and character. Available now on PSN, it only warranted a PEGI 12 rating – a little strange, considering the 17+ and M ratings it received in Japan and the US respectively.



FROBISHER SAYS

ANY GAME THAT encourages you to "smile at the ladies, don't smile at the badgers" probably deserves a spot on a weird games list. A collection of mini-games created to show off all the cool new features of the Vita, *Frobisher Says* includes games such as Squash The Toffs, Poke The Otter With A Stick, Prise Apart My Clams and Draw A Face On This Rare Egg. Some of them are more fun than others, but the variety of bonkers tasks thrown at you in quick succession will always raise a smile. If you are new to Vita, *Frobisher Says* is a great introduction to the handheld.



DEMON GAZE

CONTINUING THE THEME of quirky JRPGs, *Demon Gaze* is far less likely to get you odd looks on the bus than *Monster Monpiece*, but is still pretty weird. Ostensibly a standard (if hard) dungeon crawler, *Demon Gaze* has you build up relationships with party members and demons by taking baths with them. Truth be told, it's not as bad as it sounds, but the insinuation alone is enough to raise a few eyebrows. Add in some questionably-clad female demons and you have a game that is definitely weird, and somehow not quite as offensive as it sounds.



AKIBA'S TRIP: UNDEAD AND UNDRESSED

YOU MIGHT BE able to guess why this one is here. Demons have taken over the Tokyo district of Akihabara and, entirely coincidentally, they have all taken the form of attractive women! To defeat these demons, the player must strip their clothes and expose them to sunlight. Needless to say, *Akiba's Trip* isn't exactly the most progressive game out there. It's not pornography, but the fact it's getting localised is still rather surprising. The game also features a bunch of real-world Akihabara locations, because obviously that's what you'll be paying attention to.



DANGANRONPA

DANGANRONPA IS A game where a bunch of genius high-school students get trapped in a deadly version of their school by an evil talking teddy bear – and that's just the first five minutes. A lot of weird stuff happens to a lot of weird people in *Danganronpa*, from the biker gang leader with a physics-defying pompadour hairdo to the upstanding citizen who is so obsessed with justice that he demands punishment whenever making a mistake. It's a great game, and the surreal tone and crazy story beats help create a unique personality and one of the best stories on Vita.



GUNHOUSE

A PS MOBILE game mixing puzzle games and tower defence, *Gunhouse* has some of the strangest visual design we've seen in a long time. Play a match-three puzzle game to create ammunition which then fills one of three guns, firing at encroaching enemies that are crawling ever closer to your titular gunhouse. Playing like a mixture of *Bejeweled* and *Plants Vs Zombies*, *Gunhouse* is set apart by some seriously strange cartoon art. Leering clouds, surprised pyramids, robot dogs, evil penguins, enormous dapper robot king bosses... it's all very odd.



DECEPTION IV: BLOOD TIES

ARGUABLY THE WORLD'S only trap-'em-up franchise, the *Deception* series has been providing strange strategy-RPG fun for almost a decade now. The weird part applies when you start experimenting with some of the more bizarre traps, especially those in the Humiliation category. While things can get pretty gory, there is also a huge amount of slapstick humour, with traps like rolling boulders, electrocution, springboards, spiked walls, human cannons, falling bathtubs, banana peels, runaway trains and iron horses with pointy saddles. Ouch.



CONCEPTION 2: CHILDREN OF THE SEVEN STARS

CONCEPTION 2 IS a turn-based RPG with a bizarre mechanic. Your character attends the Star God Academy, and must produce 'Star Children' to battle evil by 'classmating' with your female friends, hence the "conception" of the title. This 'classmating' isn't as dirty as it sounds, with both participants touching one another before transferring their energies to a special doll to create the Star Child. There's a bit of panting, but that's about as dirty as it gets. Still, it's bloody weird, and the intention is clearly there. Maybe not one to play around your significant other.



SORCERY SAGA: CURSE OF THE GREAT CURRY GOD

A DUNGEON CRAWLER about finding various magical curries, the special edition of *Sorcery Saga* (the 'Hot and Spicy, Everything Nicey' edition) came with a bib, plastic spoon and plate. Despite the light-hearted premise, this is a classic roguelike that hardcore RPG fans should enjoy, and the fact that the whole thing is about curry is merely a pleasant bonus. *Sorcery Saga* is the kind of light-hearted but hardcore game that only Japan seems able to make these days, and it's one of our favourite Vita RPGs. Plus, what's better than magical curry?



DOKI-DOKI UNIVERSE

DOKI-DOKI UNIVERSE starts with a robot named QT3 and a talking red balloon accidentally being left on an asteroid by a space-faring human family. 40 years later the pair are discovered by Alien Jeff, who takes them to a planet called Home. The whole game is a personality test of sorts to determine whether QT3 possesses humanity, but in reality it's your personality that is getting a good once-over. With a whimsical, cartoony artstyle and a bunch of unique NPCs to learn about and try to befriend, *Doki-Doki Universe* is a fun, weird time that also lets you fly through space on a piece of poo.



PS4 EVOLUTION

How your favourite games are better on PS4

RACING

Travelling at insane speeds has never looked so good, but there is more than just flashy visuals taking the PS4 to the top of the podium

Racing games wouldn't exist without some Greek pottery from the 6th Century BCE. Okay, so that's a bit of an assumption to make but let us explain so you don't think we're going mad.

Discovered in 1844, the François Vase holds one of the earliest depictions of a chariot race. It seems that for thousands of years, humans have loved to test their mettle in home-built contraptions travelling at absurd speeds. When you put it like that, how can you fail to love the thrill of racing? It's a simple formula in reality: two or more people compete point-to-point, or on a circuit, to see who can reach the finish line first. It's ideal fodder for games developers, as 1973's *Space Race* proved.

Sony's PlayStation platform has had its fair share of excellent racing games over the years. After arcade-inspired beginnings with launch title, *Ridge Racer*, the PlayStation's position at the top of the racing game podium was cemented by Codemasters' legendary *TOCA Touring Car Championship* and Psygnosis' excellent *Formula 1* (virtualising the halcyon days of the British Touring Car Championship and the Formula One World Championship respectively).

While titles similarly grounded in licensed reality have continued to develop, the PlayStation 2's introduction coincided with a purple patch for the modified car world. This was reflected in the generation's predilection for street racers such as *Need For Speed Underground* and *Midnight Club*. On top of various more outlandish offerings (no doubt inspired by the devilishly difficult PSone classic, *Wipeout*) racing games of all flavours continued to polish the silverware through the PS3 era before arriving here, seven months into the PlayStation 4's reign atop the console tree, where just one racing game is currently available: *Need For Speed Rivals*.

EA's long-running franchise provided us with a first glimpse of racing in the new generation but, as more competitors join the grid, what can we expect to make our racers – as a famous French electro duo might put it – harder, better, faster, and stronger?

The obvious development is in graphics. 1080p is de rigueur though, as *Driveclub*'s Evolution Studios is finding, achieving pin-sharp pixels with a high frame rate isn't

as easy as a Sebastian Vettel Grand Prix victory. Still, racing games are going to look more beautiful, with detailed arenas to compete in, photorealistic vehicles, and trackside fans who are a little less Flat Stanley and a little more Fat Sam (with added dynamism to boot). But, graphical developments are part and parcel of a new console generation. After all, PS3 launch titles *Motorstorm* and *F1: Championship Edition* made us 'ooh' and 'aah' at their gorgeous visuals.

One of the biggest trends set to be coming our way in the upcoming spate of PS4 racers is the need to collaborate with your online buddies. While real-life motorsport is as much about the team as the monkey behind the wheel, virtual racing has often been a solitary affair. However, while racing fans still enjoy a host of single-player modes during the last generation, it was telling that games without a dedicated online race mode stuck out like a sore thumb. While the last generation saw online racers battle against one another though, *Driveclub* and *The Crew* expect you to recruit your friends as teammates, enlisting their help to take on various other clans (the clue's in the title, we suppose).

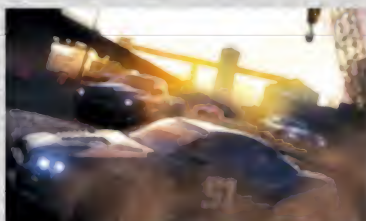


5 THINGS EVERY RACING GAME NEEDS



HANDLING

We were going to put 'realism' here. But, a developer's choice on the handling spectrum – ranging from 'Arcade' to 'Simulation' – has need to match its chosen target demographic.



VARIETY

Racing in circles can, even to motorsport fans, become a little bit mind numbing after a while. Excellent racing games need lots of circuits to test your mettle, and a wide range of different vehicles.



DLC

Last gen saw the rise of DLC in all game genres and, whether free or paid-for, being able to add extra cars and tracks to your collection ensures that the game stays fresh for longer.



CUSTOMISATION

Every driver is different, so it is vital that you are able to tune your car to suit your style. Customisation shouldn't stop at mechanics; it's cool when you can reflect your personality in your car's visuals.



AI/COMPETITION

The clue is in the name. These are racing games so the AI needs to be able to provide you with competition. Large grids are a must while your virtual competitors need to think and react fluidly.

"5,000 SQUARE KILOMETRES AWAIT YOU IN UBISOFT'S RACER"

No doubt hoping to cash in on the success of other team-based genres (such as *Call Of Duty's* huge success online) it's an intriguing move but, while not a dedicated racing game, *Grand Theft Auto V's* racing mode showed the fun that can be had carefully devising a race tactic with your friends before unleashing it on your unsuspecting rivals. What's more, while online competition and racing games should be a match made in heaven, the reality is often more disappointing as many players descend into trolling tactics. By having your friends to back you up in the heat of battle, it means that at least some of the racers will be on your side and, if things do get a little bit Pastor Maldonado, you can always just gang up on everyone else. After all, a speeding vehicle is a pretty handy weapon.

In order to make this new emphasis on community work, *The Crew* is implementing a massive open-world map. 5,000 square kilometres await you in Ubisoft's street racer, due out towards the back end of this year but, while this will allow you to cruise around to your heart's content taking in the stunning US scenery, there is also a more exciting reason for open worlds to replace the traditional menu-to-circuit delivery method.

△×□ Shiny, photorealistic visuals are a given but this generation is going to be about much more than just graphics.



FEATURE | PS4 EVOLUTION: RACING



△×□ Perhaps we'll finally see a rally game that looks as good as the original *MotorStorm* PS3 trailer...

"SIMULATION FANS DEFINITELY HAVE CAUSE TO REJOICE"

GAME CHANGER: PROJECT CARS



According to the marketing spiel, *Project CARS* is going to be "the most authentic, beautiful, intense and technically-advanced racing game on the planet" upon its release in November. Judging by the screenshots and developmental gameplay videos, we have no reason to doubt that. Slightly Mad Studios appears to have made a game that out-real-lives real life, with achingly gorgeous visuals. While we can't speak for the handling, its focus on taking the simulation crown away from *Gran Turismo* with the introduction of PC-level physics is no bad thing.

Possibly the most amazing thing about this project, though, is that it has no publisher. Instead, funding has been raised by the developer and a community of well-wishing gamers ('CARS' stands for 'Community Assisted Racing Simulator'). By purchasing Tool Packs, players are able to help develop content – in a similar manner to the modding community for *rFactor* – and, for their efforts, they will be rewarded with a cut of the profits. Oh, and a bloody awesome looking racing game. Bring it on.



The open world of *The Crew* means it has been possible for developer Ivory Towers to implement MMO-like elements into the gameplay. You will always be online (along with your crew members) meaning that you can challenge anyone, anywhere in the world, to a race of your choosing whenever you feel like it. Unlike *Grand Theft Auto V*'s online servers (where only 12 people populate each map) *The Crew* places everyone in the same world, with the eight players closest to you highlighted. This means that the thrill of competition is never far away and, with multiple different styles of racing in *The Crew*, there really looks like there is going to be something for everyone.

With an increased focus on friends, it is no surprise to learn that social media-style integration is only going to become more prevalent as the generation wears on. EA's Autolog's presence is continually expanding, with similar systems for notifying players of your records rolling out in *Driveclub* and *The Crew*. However, social media isn't just going to be used

as a means of listing your greatest achievements. The introduction of the Share button and video streaming sites such as Twitch mean that broadcasting your races is likely to become more and more of a thing.

In fact, TORA (The Online Racing Association) has already made a name for itself in the PC gaming world, gaining official recognition from the MSA, a real motorsport governing body. As more racing games are developed, especially those that allow you to race in recognised real-life series, console racing could become the place to spot the next Lewis Hamilton. The setup costs are vastly lower than buying your own racing car and, with Ustream and Twitch providing a platform on which you can showcase your skills behind the virtual wheel, it's certainly no far-fetched pipedream. *Gran Turismo*'s Academy has shown that computer gamers can make pretty mean professional racing drivers, after all.

Of course, for something such as that to happen, racing games will need to become more realistic, and they undoubtedly will. *Gran*

PS3 INSPIRATION



HUGE EGO

Codemasters' EGO engine moved the goal posts with its destructible environments and changing track conditions. The former found its way into *Colin McRae: Dirt* under the guise of the Neon engine, with the latter a result of the impressive Ego 1.5 system in *F1 2010*.



GRAND THEFT AUTO

Open worlds, crews of friends, customisation apps? If all this sounds familiar let us point you towards *GTA V*. Among its mini-games the street racing was hilariously fun, especially with a group of friends who could help you take on the gaggle of online hooligans.



PC SIMULATION

The PS4's architecture is going to make simulators more of a possibility than before. While *Gran Turismo 6* was the pinnacle of handling prowess for PlayStation, PC titles such as *Assetto Corsa*, *iRacing* and *rFactor 2* make Polyphony's title pale in comparison.



△○×□ The social elements of *Driveclub* are a great indication of the new features made possible by PS4.



△○×□ This is as close as we're likely to get to a car like this. Sob.



Turismo 6 showed the true capabilities of the PS3 system but the PlayStation 4 has so much more firepower it would be absurd to think that things such as handling dynamics would stand still. PCs have long been considered the tool of choice for 'real' virtual racing enthusiasts yet, with its similar architecture, the PS4 could spring a whole host of excellent driving simulations. The thought of a console-based *rFactor* or *iRacing* definitely gets our motor redlining.

While elements such as tyre degradation, evolving track surfaces and ever-more realistic handling physics are nothing new, the PS4 generation has seen such a step up that the line between virtual and reality is surely going to get even thinner. That certainly seems to be the case with *Project CARS*, a community-developed racing simulation that is jaw-droppingly gorgeous to look at. Featuring a host of stunning exotica to drive at a range of real-life locations, the Slightly Mad Studios offering looks set to provide arguably the most realistic driving experience ever seen on console when it comes

out later in the year. Whether or not it will be able to compete with whatever Polyphony produces in the long run, simulation fans who don't want the expense of a full-blown computer definitely have cause to rejoice.

Of course, simulation is not everyone's thing. Some of the very best racing games have been strongly rooted in fantasy (*Micro Machines V3*, anyone?). That's why Sony's strong support of indie developers is likely to see such arcade-style fare return with a vengeance. While the blockbuster developers can afford to accurately model tyre flex and aerodynamic grip, we would expect a host of independent racing games to spring up as the new generation develops over time. With *Resogun* showing what can be achieved, we wouldn't be surprised to see something as addictive and compelling achieved in the racing game sector: a modern-day *WipeOut* would be incredible.

The other thing the rise of indie gaming may ensure is the return of niche racing titles. *TOCA Touring Car Championship*'s success stemmed

from the fact the series it was portraying was in rude health throughout the PSone era, with world-class drivers becoming household names thanks to the involvement of myriad manufacturers. Nowadays, the BTCC is still a huge success in the motorsport world but it doesn't have the international cachet that would help drive strong sales of a spin-off computer game. However, with a queue of brave new games developers, it might not be so crazy to think that some of the more successful real-life racing series may spawn a PlayStation equivalent for their fans to play.

While racing games may seem like a straightforward formula to the uninitiated, there are plenty of improvements that we can expect to see in the coming years, and that's without mentioning the possibility of VR integration. Whether looking for an arcade racer that is easy to pick up and play with friends or a hardcore simulation that tests your driving god status, the PlayStation 4 generation is definitely on course to hit top gear pretty soon.

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"AIDEN HIMSELF IS A
GENERALLY UNLIKEABLE
HERO WHO IS EVERY BIT
AS RUTHLESS AS THE MAN"

Watch Dogs

Next-gen starts here...right?



PUBLISHER
Ubisoft

DEVELOPER
Ubisoft

PSN PRICE
£59.99

PLAYERS
1-8

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@watchdogsgame

INSTALL SIZE
22 GB

Trophies 40



ALSO ON PS3

THE SOONER DEVELOPERS abandon the PS3, the better. It's a harsh statement but with cross-platform development clearly holding back PS4 games, we're not going to start seeing what the new console can really do until teams are able to focus their efforts on it. There are solutions – there's no harm in titles being developed exclusively for either console, plus PS3 versions can be farmed out to other teams, just as handheld versions have been for years. But there's always the sense that you're not getting the real game in these situations, rather a knock-off version that pales in comparison to the 'proper' one. Still not convinced? Fine. Just stick *Watch Dogs* and *Second Son* side by side and see if you can work out which one makes better use of the hardware.

That's not to say that Ubisoft's anticipated hack-'em-up is a bad-looking game, because it isn't. It's slick and clean and at times genuinely beautiful (mainly at night) but it just doesn't have the same level of graphical sheen as Sucker Punch's exclusive. Whether this is indeed down to developing the game for so many platforms at once or purely due to the world being bigger or the always-active online component is unclear. But considering the fact that this was supposed to be the game that ushered in the next generation, Chicago now can't help but feel a little underwhelming after how stunning Seattle was.

With a bigger play space come even more distractions and optional extras, with even more offered just for profiling the populace. Hitting Square busts out your phone's profiler and targeting any NPC while it's active will give you a

morsel of worthless information about them, an opportunity to siphon cash from their bank account, a glimpse of a text or voice conversation or, in rare instances, a lead on a crime or other activity that you can then pursue. All of these are surprisingly infrequent in repeating which, coupled with a comparably lengthy main narrative in line with the main series *Assassin's Creed* games, means there's loads to do.

The sad part about this is that Aiden's RidiculouslySmartphone makes many such missions way too easy. Need to hack a distant terminal? You can more often than not just leap through a network of security cameras and achieve your goal without so much as setting foot in enemy territory. Caught in a hectic police or gang chase? Don't worry – frequent Square button prompts pop up when you can hack environmental



objects for an easy escape. It's not even entirely the phone's fault, and you can plainly see by looking at *Watch Dogs* why so many games hold back explosives and similarly potent weapons – grab a grenade launcher on your first visit to the gun shop and every showdown that follows is a cinch, an issue compounded by the odd decision to place no penalty on death *and* to have ammo fully recover too. Blow your way out of a jam, wait for the game to save and top yourself. Easy. In a game where the phone is supposed to be Aiden's primary weapon, perhaps giving him unlimited explosives wasn't the best idea after all.

It's odd too, since so many other design choices seem to clearly promote hacking as the weapon of choice. You're unable to fire while driving, for

instance – this feels jarring after having played so many other open world games where you can, but clever use of the phone's myriad options mean that it's a fair alternative in the city, if not so much out on the winding, tech-free roads of Pawnee and other less urban areas. We'd go so far as to question the inclusion of these areas in general, actually. Sure, the sprawling suburbs, forests and plains of *GTA* helped give variety and a sense of travel to the game but here, all they do is disarm Aiden of his one superpower and turn the otherwise superb online modes into a bit of a joke.

As big *Dark Souls* fans, it's probably not all that surprising that we love the multiplayer component of *Watch Dogs*. It's the same basic idea (albeit with a phone and grenade launcher



△○×□ Once you've got a grenade launcher, you'll breeze through any combat situation.

instead of Havel The Rock's armour and dual Avelyns), allowing you to drop into another player's world to either tail or hack them. While visiting, you appear as an NPC model, a little like in *Assassin's Creed*'s somehow enjoyable multiplayer – behave naturally and they'll have no way of spotting you by eye, but the profiler can still pick you out if they get close enough. It becomes a tense game of cat and mouse as the victim either hunts you down or makes a break for it, but if the person you're invading happens to be out in Pawnee, you might as well pack it up and go home. With no crowds to blend into and bugged all decent hiding spots, you'll almost always be discovered. Between players hanging out there to abuse this to up their own Notoriety score and them making a break for the hills as soon as you enter their game, one of the most inventive and enjoyable aspects of the game turns out to be a little too easy to abuse.

We only came to learn how much we enjoyed multiplayer because the narrative was taking far too long to get going and wallowing in ham-fisted emotional nonsense and we needed to take some time out. The story and missions along the way do both improve later on, to be fair, and even present some memorable set pieces and characters – Aiden's buddy Jordi

SECOND SCREEN Bring down other players using your phone

R-E-S-P-E-C-T-O-S

The *Watch Dogs* companion app is unique in that it is used primarily to interfere and compete with other players rather than to support your own gameplay.

IS IT A BIRD?

One-on-one challenges take the form of checkpoint races for the console player while you, on your phone or tablet, control a chopper. Tail Aiden, trigger hazards and send in police units to stop him.

REWARD OFFERED

As with the other online modes, success in the mobile version offers cash and Notoriety. The app even has its own levelling system with perks and unlocks as you improve your rank.

DETOUR

Even though it's visually simple and there's not much in the way of payoff, sending patrol units to force another player into a trap you've set is still pretty rewarding... when it works, at least.





ΔOX□ Okay, so it's hardly the least conspicuous outfit but we couldn't resist the opportunity to cosplay as Dante.



ΔOX□ Causing mayhem is a great way of luring invaders out of hiding or misleading them.



ΔOX□ If you don't like the vehicle handling on tarmac, you might want to avoid going off-road.

pretty much steals the show, perhaps because he's the only character in this world that seems to fit it. The citizens of Chicago seem to fear and bemoan the Big Brother state with one breath only to openly reveal their petty crimes and deviances with the next – this vision of a world where information is power is neither political nor parody, rather an odd halfway house that doesn't really make all that much sense. One-note extras don't help here, but most of the blame has to fall on Aiden himself, a generally unlikeable hero who is every bit as ruthless as The Man when it comes to invasions of privacy and who uses the same morally questionable tactics as those he fights.

It's such a shame that this side of the game falls down too, especially since it's mechanically solid as a rock. We've seen a few complaints about vehicle handling but with such a variety of cars and bikes (not to mention the ability to summon the one you want from your phone), you can generally just stick to the ones you can make work. Gunplay is sound too, improved just like the rest of the game by the ability to work elements of tactical hacking into firefights. The best open-world games are those that manage to tempt you away from the next waypoint marker with all manner of side missions, collectibles and other such distractions and in this respect, *Watch Dogs* delivers. Hell, we had a hard enough time not just queueing up another invasion rather than chasing that blinking story diamond – even though the narrative may not have

grabbed us, the tension of evading other players online sure did, and we hope Ubisoft builds on this aspect of the game with the inevitable title updates and sequels down the line.

While *Watch Dogs* might have missed its chance to turn on the next-gen Christmas lights and usher in a new generation, it still hasn't arrived too late to impress. It looks good, it plays well and while its narrative may let it down, the hacking mechanics and presentation are superb, as are the thematic gameplay nuggets the game's techno-crazy premise allows. Worth the wait, then? Sure, but perhaps not for the reasons we were expecting. It's not the game that shows us the kinds of open world only possible on PS4, largely thanks to a sucker punch from *inFamous*. It's not the *GTA* killer some were hyping it to be. What it is, though, is a thoroughly enjoyable game with more than a few design problems, but one saved by some excellent creative uses of its interesting concept to offer gameplay experiences we've not come across before. Which, when you think about it, is pretty next-gen.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

No game could have lived up to the hype *Watch Dogs* had, so the fact that it even comes close is commendable. Decent solo stuff, but it's the multiplayer that steals the show.

80%

Wolfenstein: The New Order

The War... has changed



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Bethesda

DEVELOPER

MachineGames

PRICE

£47.99

PLAYERS

1

INSTALL SIZE

52.3 GB

AGE RATING

18

TWITTER

@wolfenstein

Trophies 50



ALSO ON PS3

WHAT IF THE Nazis had won the war? It's a hypothetical scenario thrown around in various forms of media, and one

apparently well suited to *Wolfenstein's* bizarre, supernatural take on World War Two. That is perhaps the biggest surprise of *Wolfenstein: The New Order* – among the cartoonish Nazi robots and huge laser rifles, there is an interesting take on just how history could have been different with a story and characters far better than they should be.

It's still all nonsense of course, but it doesn't stop the characters being surprisingly involving and the world they inhabit surprisingly fascinating. That seems to be the general theme of *The New Order*: this is a game much better than a lot of people will be expecting.

MachineGames is a new studio founded by developers who previously worked on *The Darkness* and *Chronicles Of Riddick* games – again, titles that were nowhere near as rubbish as people

expected. They seem to have done it again, bucking expectations once more.

The New Order is a sequel to the 2009 *Wolfenstein* game, although prior knowledge is unnecessary, as outside of a few returning characters these are separate plots. You'll once again control series hero and possessor of an incredible jawline, BJ Blazkowicz, as the game begins in 1946 with a final raid on the stronghold of the feared Nazi general, Deathshead. Clearly, events have already diverged from reality, but fans of the series will know this is par for the course. In this opening level, you'll face robotic dogs, giant Nazi mechs and more outlandish enemies, setting the course for the rest of the game.

Things don't go to plan and Blazkowicz ends up in a vegetative state, left to rot in an insane asylum for 14 years until he awakens in 1960 to find a wildly different world. The Nazis have won the war after dropping nukes on the States, and now rule the world with an iron fist. A suitably dystopian mixture of 1984 and *Half-Life*

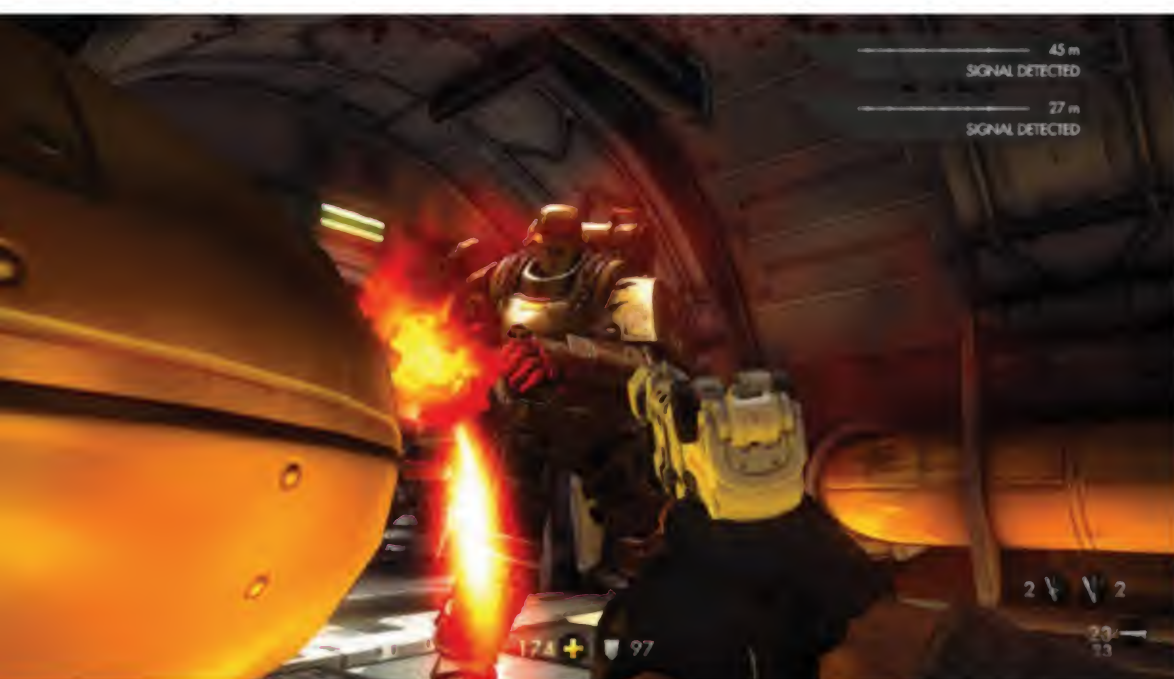


2's City 17, the 'new world' is an incredibly atmospheric, oppressive place. There are few shades of grey here, and while the citizens may waver, the officers in charge of this new Nazi world are all very, very evil. The only thing they need is a bullet in the cranium, and BJ, despite now being middle-aged and rather confused, aims to be the man to put it there.

What follows is a purposefully old-school FPS, albeit one with plenty of nods to modern game design. Unfortunately, the first ten minutes are the worst example of this classic approach, opening with a boring tutorial and a crap turret section. It's a seriously underwhelming start, but stick it out for the first quarter of an hour and things quickly pick up.

The core gameplay of *The New Order* is an interesting mixture of old-school and modern design, one that meshes together well to create an idiosyncratic





△OX□ The alternate history setting affords MachineGames all kinds of creative freedom, and the team uses it brilliantly.



△OX□ The story isn't actually terrible, which is far better than most people expected it to be.

function, another classic FPS staple we've been missing recently. Holding L1 lets you lean left and right as well as peek up and down, and on the harder difficulties you'll be relying on this to get some cheeky shots off while avoiding them yourself.

Health is once again an odd mixture of old and new. HP and armour are both measured numerically, and while armour doesn't recharge, health does – but only up to the nearest multiple of 20. Health and armour kits can both be found all over the place, and are pretty crucial. The small HP recharge is useful in a pinch, but running around with 20 Health is still likely to get you killed before long. Collecting health packs when your HP is at a max will 'overcharge' you, increasing your health over the max but with it slowly ticking down, another old mechanic we'd all but forgotten about. One irritating element to all this is having to press Square each time you want to pick something up, be it a health kit or ammo. Smashing Square all the time is a tad annoying, but we understand why the mechanic exists: choosing when to pick up health kits is a key strategy to learn. Still, picking up ammo automatically would be appreciated.

experience. BJ can carry as many guns as he can find, dual-wielding almost any weapon – even sniper rifles. We've missed dual-wielding, once a staple of FPS games but left to rot as the realism trend took hold. Nothing is as cool as storming an enemy stronghold with an automatic shotgun in each hand or spraying an enemy mech full of holes with an assault rifle on both sides. Dual-wielding removes your ability to aim down the sights, but who needs that? Running and gunning is a perfectly viable tactic for most of the game, although the higher difficulties will probably necessitate some use of cover.

There's a light cover system: aiming down the sights near the edge of cover will lean out, but that's it – plus, you can't do it if you are dual-wielding, so it doesn't come in particularly handy. What is far more useful is the return of the lean



△×□ The laser-powered LKW receives a bunch of upgrades over the course of the game, and will be a constant and powerful tool in your arsenal. It makes Nazis explode.

For the most part, that's it. Shoot a bunch of Nazis, Nazi dogs and Nazi robots across a campaign that will take you all over the world and even up to the moon. Contrary to its name, *The New Order* isn't trying to break any new ground – indeed, that is precisely the point.

The old-school approach also applies to the way the story is presented. It's remarkable to think that, back when *Half-Life* pioneered telling a story without removing control from the player, that we would one day be sick and tired of 'follow the man' exposition, plodding along behind some prick as he explains exactly what is going on. It's actually refreshing to play a game with proper, cinematic cutscenes for a change – yep, we've come full circle, people. The cutscenes in *Wolfenstein* are well directed and look fantastic – perhaps the reason behind the game's enormous 50 GB install.

Otherwise, *The New Order* is a good-looking if never amazing game. It's clearly a cross-generation title, but the PS4 version is that bit cleaner, shinier and smoother than the rest. Some environments are impressive, although others suffer from classic dull, grey corridors. Old-school design can be bad as well as good.

This is apparent as some stages are far more enjoyable than others. *Wolfenstein*

is at its best when you have a simple map with a bunch of guns and a ton of Nazis to blast through, but when it tries to do other things it falls down a bit. A water level navigating through sewers in a small sub is confusing and dull, as are any other stages that involve navigating more than shooting. There's no waypoint marker to follow, and sometimes the stage design is too obtuse for its own good. Still, this is the exception rather than the rule, and most of the time little gets in the way of action.

This is good, as the action is solid and fun, if again nothing original. Guns have a hefty weight behind them, and enemy soldiers splatter apart when shot, heads exploding and limbs flying away. There aren't a huge number of weapons, but each is enjoyable and serves a different purpose, which is preferable to a bunch of guns that look different but feel the same. Each stage starts off with BJ relatively unarmed, acquiring his equipment on-site every time. As such, you'll be forced to use and become familiar with a variety of weapons, unable to simply fall back on the same one each time.

Bethesda has been ballsy and chosen to ship *Wolfenstein* without a multiplayer mode, a big statement in today's gaming world. What this means is that the campaign is of a substantial length, taking a good 12 hours at least. In the

“CONTRARY TO ITS NAME, THE NEW ORDER ISN'T TRYING TO BREAK ANY NEW GROUND”



PLAY CHALLENGE



SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...



PERKY

△ CAN YOU EARN every perk in one playthrough? It's doable, but it won't be easy.



CRACK THE CODE

□ FINDING EVERY PIECE of the Enigma Code and then solving it will earn you a new mode... can you find out what it is?

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

△○×□ A few characters return from the 2009 *Wolfenstein* game, but you don't really need to know who they are.

△○×□ A choice at the start of the game has a big effect on the rest of the story, so you'll need two playthroughs to get the full picture.



PERKS OF THE JOB

B.J. can level up his skills with a four-tiered perks system, split into sections like Stealth and Assault. Playing in a certain way will earn the perks for that play-style: dual-wielding frequently will make you better at dual-wielding, for example. It's a neat system that always gives you something to aim for, and with careful play it's perfectly plausible, albeit difficult, to get every perk in a single game. Keeping an eye on what your tasks are will encourage you to try a bunch of different play-styles, and the immediate rewards make it a fun and useful avenue to follow.

era of three-hour *Call Of Duty* games, it feels like the game equivalent of *War And Peace*. Replay value comes in a bunch of collectables as well as a choice made in the first stage that has a huge effect on the story for the rest of the game.

Still, outside of grabbing all those collectables or doing it again on a harder difficulty, the lack of multiplayer means many people will be done with *The New Order* after finishing it once. It's a risk any publisher runs with a single-player only game, and whether the campaign alone is worth the money is up to you.

We suspect that some people will really not get on with *Wolfenstein*. The adherence to old-school design decisions has led to elements that might turn off fans of modern shooters, without the nostalgia and appreciation for the origins of the genre.

The New Order feels like an anomaly, a single-player FPS with a focus on run-and-gun gameplay and no multiplayer. It's all much more fun than we expected, with high production values (thanks, no doubt, to Bethesda), decent graphics, an interesting story and some awesome guns. Fans of *Doom*, *Quake*, and of course *Wolfenstein* back in the day, should find something to enjoy here.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

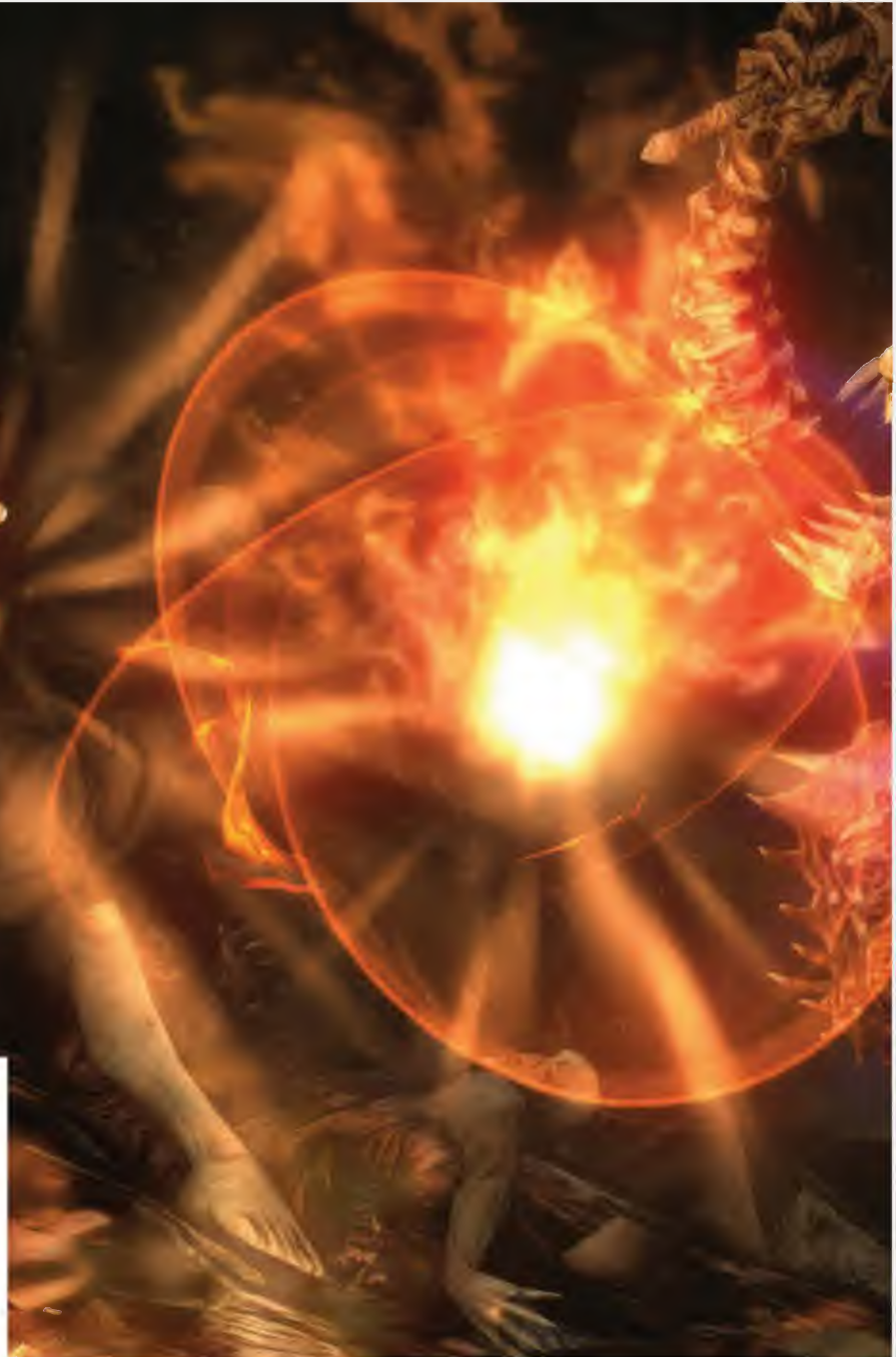
Old-school with a couple of modern ideas thrown in for good measure, *Wolfenstein* has flaws but manages to be great fun despite them. For FPS fans that are tired of *Call Of Duty*.

78%



Bound By Flame

Doesn't exactly set the world on fire



BUDGET. THAT'S THE first word that comes to mind when looking for ways to describe *Bound By Flame*. It's like *Dragon*

Age with none of BioWare's production values, *The Witcher* without CDPR's strong writing, or *Kingdoms Of Amalur* without the expansive maps to explore. There's a good reason for the total lack of epic RPGs on PS4 right now – it's just too early. These things take years to make, especially to the kind of standard that would make the most of the new hardware. The timely arrival of *Bound By Flame*, then, must either mean that Spiders is a more capable team than CD Projekt RED and BioWare or that the game just isn't anywhere near the standard as its triple-A competition. We'll give you a clue – it's not the first one.

Bound By Flame both looks and feels like a slightly upscaled version of any of the B-tier RPGs that somehow found their way onto PS3 – tat like *Arcania*, *Venetica* or *Of Orcs And Men* that proves inexplicably popular in Europe. While

it runs smoothly enough, the crude cramped environments explain how the game is able to hit 60fps at times. Character models are somewhat better (at least the primary ones are, anyway), although janky animation and some of the worst lip-sync work you'll ever see mean that even *Second Son*-standard characters would look terrible here.

If you can see past the ropery visuals and endure the tedious opening, though, a decent action-RPG slowly emerges from this ugly-ass cocoon. While combat lacks the feedback and impact of the genre's best, it's rewarding all the same. Critical hits and perfectly-timed counters trigger a satisfying slow-motion effect with tons of invincibility, making Ranger characters with *Assassin's Creed*-style counter spam both viable and enjoyable. It's far from easy, mind, and relying too heavily on such cheap tricks is likely to get you killed. Play on anything above the default difficulty and you'll get smacked around the moment your mind wanders in combat. It's no *Dark Souls* (neither in terms of fair challenge nor combat

weight) but once you get used to the lack of feedback and the gaping parry windows, it's a solid system all the same.

While this pillar holds up its corner of the game well, not all are in quite such good shape. While a few of the characters are quite interesting – from a knight who speaks exclusively in the third-person to a decaying old body inhabited by a millennia-old entity – there's no real consistency to the world or lore. Some speak in typical fantasy riddles, some use much more modern language while others (the lead in particular) frequently cough up globs of profanity when you least expect it. It's a bit of a mess frankly, but unraveling the intricacies of the world's plight is still interesting enough if you're happy to sit through all that nonsense.

The game's primary hook of giving hero Vulcan the choice to either embrace or suppress the demon within him sounds like it could make for a decent morality system, but the reality is far less impressive. There's one initial choice, little more than 'Become demon? Y/N'

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Focus Home Interactive

DEVELOPER
Spiders

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1

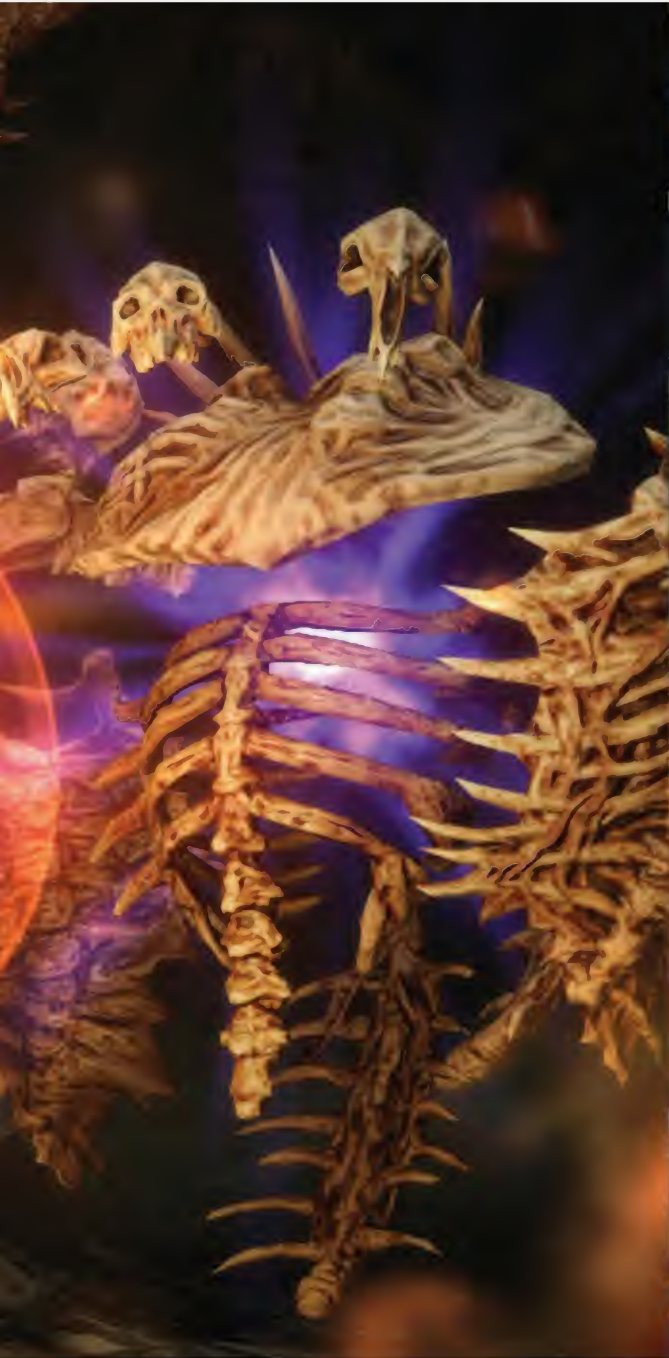
AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@SpidersGames

INSTALL SIZE
5.6 GB

Trophies 42





ΔOX□ In-game text is littered with spelling and grammar errors, and doesn't even match up with the dialogue some of the time.



"A DECENT ACTION-RPG SLOWLY EMERGES FROM THIS UGLY-ASS COCOON"

and that's pretty much it save for a rare opportunity to do something a bit naughty if you so desire. It also misses the point of such a system – usually you see perks associated with both good and evil paths but here, the demonic path gets powerful new abilities while the only real benefit to retaining your humanity is that you get to keep your head horn-free. It's not even like the world responds that differently to you either way and outside of a few scripted encounters, most people will talk to you pretty much the same way whether you're a virtuous hero or a blazing-horned bastard.

Crafting proves to be slightly better developed, with the ability to modify various aspects of the gear you find or buy with a selection of options for each slot and visual changes too. It's pretty neat in concept and execution, at least in the short term, but it quickly becomes apparent that only the raw damage and protection bonuses are really worth investing in. You're able to create ammo and potions as well – expect to have to spam the latter on higher difficulties

when unreadable AOE attacks and status ailments become far more prevalent throughout.

There's no denying that *Bound By Flame* fills a gap in the PS4's catalogue, but it's hardly the best of fits – this is a mediocre, short-lived and by-the-numbers action-RPG saved by entertaining combat and a few novel mechanics, a game destined to be outclassed by the first serious challenger that comes along. A vaguely entertaining support act for the likes of *Dragon Age* and *The Witcher*, then, but not one that is in any real danger of upstaging the headliners.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

While never truly bad, *Bound By Flame* is rarely much better than serviceable either. Still, this bog-standard fantasy fare has the PS4 very much to itself... for now, at least.

62%



ΔOX□ Edwen is a powerful witch and a walking wardrobe malfunction. And yes, you can do a sex on her. Videogames!



Daylight

Horrifying for all the wrong reasons

DAYLIGHT



IT WAS ONLY a matter of time. From *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* to the recent *Outlast*, the new wave of first-person horror games have been excellent at best and alright at worst, but *Daylight* is here to remind us all that even such a promising genre can go horribly wrong.

The basic setup is the same as most other examples of this burgeoning genre. You control Sarah, who wakes up disorientated and confused in a dark, abandoned hospital. Your mission is simple: find the way out.

Daylight is written by former IGN host Jessica Chobot, who also voices the main character. This is a problem, as while she might be a perfectly capable presenter, Chobot cannot write or act to save her life, as gamers who remember her turn in *Mass Effect 3* will attest. The script is abysmal, a generic tale of a hospital with a dark, hidden past delivered through little notes inexplicably left about the place, each leaking poorly written exposition. Her acting is even worse. Sarah randomly blurting out "Is anyone there?" or "Hello?" at random

DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Atlus

DEVELOPER

Zombie Studios

PSN PRICE

£12.79

PLAYERS

1

INSTALL SIZE

2.0GB

AGE RATING

16

TWITTER

@PlayDaylight

Trophies 16



September 26th, 1934

I don't know if we can accept any more inmates. It's gotten to the point where we have four inmates to a cell. Working the front desk, I see every single one come in, and each one looks crazier than the last one.

I'm not sure how much longer this penitentiary can operate at

ΔOX□ It should take around three hours to finish *Daylight*, and odds are you'll never want to do it again.

intervals, sounding entirely unconvincing and ruining any potential tension that may have built up.

The only other voice you'll be hearing for most of the game is a mysterious man who tends to spout ominous nonsense to you over the phone in the hammiest voice possible. Sounding like something out of a pantomime, the guy is completely at odds with the ominous atmosphere the game seems to otherwise want to build. It doesn't help that he spits out nonsense like "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned... and you seem to have scorned them all." Awful.

Your phone doubles as both a map and flashlight, Sarah constantly holding it out in front of herself to see the way ahead. Unlike *Outlast*, battery life isn't an issue, so you'll never find yourself in total darkness. Your objective in each area is to find a number of 'remnants', the aforementioned notes dotted around the map. Once you've gotten enough, you can pick up a key item that will unlock the exit to the next area. That's all you do for the whole game – walk through nondescript corridors, hunting for little scraps of paper that unlock the next bunch of nondescript corridors. Most are easy to find, but occasionally you'll be left wandering around with nowhere to go and no idea what to do. Using a glowstick will briefly illuminate the area, highlighting elements of the

environment you can interact with that you might have missed. You get loads, so you can have one out almost all the time, making the tedious pixel-hunt slightly more bearable.

This menial task is supposedly made more difficult and scary by the ghostly 'shades' that stalk you, but the reality

"THE GAME BEING DIFFERENT EVERY TIME IS WORTHLESS IF EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THOSE TIMES IS CRAP"

is far less ominous. The shades rarely appear, and usually mooch around in the distance, not posing a threat. If they do get near, you can easily outrun them, and if worst comes to worst you can light a flare that will kill all nearby foes. Again, you get plenty, so you are basically never in any real danger. This turns a potentially scary ghost into an annoying bump in the road that you can easily circumvent and get back to picking up bits of paper.

The stage layouts of *Daylight* are randomly generated, with a new map every time you play supposedly leading to a feeling of unfamiliarity. What it really means is that the map layouts make no sense and feel unrealistic. Corridors endlessly lead to other corridors,

creating a building design that no one could have ever actually inhabited. If the intention is to make it feel disorientating and confusing, Zombie Games has failed – instead, it simply feels uninspired and lazy. The game being different every time is worthless if every single one of those times is crap.

Daylight fails in every aspect of what it aims to be and to do. It isn't scary, it isn't interesting, it isn't original and it isn't fun. You think a developer called Zombie Studios would know a thing or two about horror, but *Daylight* is a boring slog that simply isn't worth anyone's time.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

***Daylight* is an utter mess of a game that never manages to build atmosphere or scare the player. Add in an atrocious script and voice acting and you have a game to avoid.**

20%

ΔOX□ As if the environments weren't dull enough, there's even a sewer level in the second half of the game. Everybody hates sewer levels.

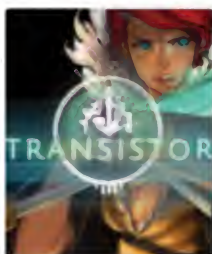




"WE'VE GOT EXPLOSIONS
EQUIPPED TO LASERS
AND A VIRUS THAT BOUNCES
FROM ENEMY TO ENEMY
AS IT HEALS US"

Transistor

See you in the country



THE PROCESS IS

destroying the city! It's the Camerata's fault, and only the Transistor sword

can stop them and – wait, is this going too fast? Well, tough. You're leaping into the action whether you like it or not. What are you waiting for? Lives are (possibly) at stake here – it's a serious life or death situation (probably).

That's the attitude that Supergiant Games has taken with *Transistor*, and while it's initially a little jarring, it's actually pretty refreshing not be led *sloowly* into the action, a million little tutorials in your way. The story is there if you want it, but it's nothing more than an almost deliberately obtuse framework for one of the most engaging battle systems we've ever played with.

You're Red, a popular singer, and that's pretty much all you ever find out about yourself, as Red's gone and lost her voice to the Camerata (read: standard science gone awry not-really-evil-but-evil group). Having a silent protagonist is usually a great way to let the player imprint their own personality and style of play onto a

character, but here it's rather undermined by your love interest who's gotten himself stuck in a magic tech sword thing, the Transistor. Constantly talking, and we do mean constantly, Sword Guy belittles the agency of the player, telling you what doors are and that you don't know what's behind them. Or that you should keep moving (like you were going to just stand still the rest of the game). He also kindly informs you when you're in an alley. And what a boat is.

Frankly, a little silence from Sword Guy would have worked wonders to make Red our own, as Supergiant's idea of her is clearly different from the way we wanted to play, as we found out when he warned us to sneak carefully through a room because we'd never be able to take on all those enemies. Screw that, we've got explosions equipped to lasers and a virus that bounces from enemy to enemy as it heals us; there's no way we're not attacking *everything*, and you, Sword Guy, should be fully supportive of our ability and desire to do a bunch of explody murders. Mute him and stick the subtitles on, and you'll be able to pay a lot

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Supergiant Games

DEVELOPER
Supergiant Games

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
2.4 GB

AGE RATING
12

TWITTER
@SupergiantGames

Trophies 34



△×□ The graphic novel meets sci-fi meets fantasy meets watercolours art style is just stunning, and the isometric view shows it off perfectly.



△○×□ As you might expect, the music is just as beautiful as the locations, with everything working together really well to create the sci-fi high-tech future city setting.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL



You choose four abilities, or Functions, for the Transistor (the massive sword) out of an (eventually) available 12. Each of these Functions – named Spark, Purge, Cull, etc – can then have up to two support effects added to it, picked from the same 12 abilities. And you unlock more slots the more you level up. Basically, your 12 Functions have different abilities depending on whether they are Active, an Upgrade or Passive. It sounds complex, and that's because it is, but brilliantly so. Easy to use, tricky to get well balanced; you can spend a long time playing around with these awesome adaptive abilities.



△○×□ Boss battles were one of the few letdowns in *Transistor* – they're great, but sadly few and far between.

more attention to the excellent combat at work here.

And it is truly excellent. Let's talk about those lasers and explosions and viruses. You have various Functions (explained a little more in the boxout) that add attacks to the Transistor, and you can combine them for additional abilities, as well as using them for support. It's not just surface level prettiness either; the further you get in the game, the more Functions you acquire, and then it gets really interesting. The combat itself is a great mix of real-time and almost turn-based, as you have a meter that you can use every five seconds that pauses the action and lets you set up various moves to be played out super fast. Master these two elements, and it's amazing how empowering it is. If you ever find it being too easy, there are also Limiters to use, which give you a handicap for more XP.

Functions also act as lives. Reach the bottom of your health bar and one will be taken away from you. When you're down to none, it's back to a checkpoint for you. It works brilliantly, not only in making sure you experiment with all of the Functions to make sure you have a back-up plan if it all goes awry, but in keeping you focused on not losing any favourites you might have found. We favoured healing explosions that sent everyone into a glitchy rage, but there are any number of combinations to make, to the point where it might seem a little overwhelming. Not to worry, just find yourself a Backdoor side-area and do a little playing around with the Functions. There are challenges in these side-areas as well with Trophies aplenty, and they get so frustrating and fun that we found ourselves spending a good few hours away from the story and just learning new techniques and combinations. Which, for a game that's

technically around six to seven hours long, is a pretty impressive distraction.

Although, to be honest, no, it's not really six to seven hours long. That's just what one playthrough will get you to, maybe with another 45 mins of dicking about in the world added on. But we can't imagine getting to the end and thinking 'Yep, that's enough for me. I don't have all the abilities yet, I haven't unlocked all the slots, and there are these Limiters I never got around to trying out, but man, what a satisfying story. I think I'm done.' The story is like the art style: painfully stylish and achingly cool, but not realistic in the slightest and there just isn't much past the beauty of it. For all that Cloudbank is gorgeous, you can't picture people actually living there, and for all that the story makes for some cool images, it's totally ignorable.

The combat, however, makes *Transistor* worth playing through again and again. This is a game that flourishes in New Game+, if you've managed not to cringe yourself into a puddle of 'What the hell is this bullshit romance doing getting itself all over the awesome sci-fi?'. You get duplicates of Functions, making for even deeper experimentation, and tough enemies to battle. Sure, the story is standard sci-fi nonsense, but *Transistor* is a brilliant example of innovative gameplay done beautifully well.

Rebecca Richards

VERDICT

A stunning game with a hell of a battle system. Ignore most of the slapped-together storyline and the tediously constant B-movie voice acting and you'll have an excellent time.

87%



Kingpin

REVIEW

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2

PS4

x 2



The Amazing Spider-Man 2

Swing and a miss



ALSO ON PS3

DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Activision

DEVELOPER

Beenox

PSN PRICE

£49.99

PLAYERS

1

INSTALL SIZE

9.7GB

AGE RATING

16+

TWITTER

@BeenoxTeam

Trophies 47



If there's one thing you want from a superhero game, it's that it in some way captures the essence of the superhero into whose shoes the player is stepping. In the case of Spider-Man, that means fluidity, athleticism, speed, precision and instinct. If there's a spirit being channelled by *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, however, it's not that of its titular hero – the web-slinging, all-action, master of movement – it's that of a confused, crack-addled house spider, caught in a stream of stale beer, being washed ever-closer to the dirty plughole that represents its irrevocable doom.

The Amazing Spider-Man 2 opens on a shot that gradually reveals the text of a glowing neon nightclub sign. The nightclub is called... 'niteclub'. In retrospect, that staggering lack of imagination almost seems like a joke about what's to come, with *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* seemingly content to steal all its ideas from other games and present nothing original, fresh or interesting to complement the mechanics it has 'borrowed'.

That *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* relies so heavily on mechanics pilfered from other games – primarily the *Batman: Arkham* series – need not necessarily be a huge problem in and of itself. After all, how many titles like this one have implemented their own version of Batman's detective vision since the release of *Batman: Arkham Asylum*? How many times have we seen games try to replicate the elegant simplicity of the *Arkham* series' combat system? The answer is 'a lot'.

No, the issue with *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* is not so much that it has nicked its ideas from other titles (though that doesn't count in its favour), it's that the game has implemented the ideas it's borrowed badly. Very, very badly. Take combat as an example. You won't be surprised to hear that the combat system is another of those *Arkham* rip-offs that's based around an attack button, a stun move and a counter button that you'll need to press when highlighted enemies move to attack.



△×□ The game's world is pretty boring, but there'll occasionally be graphical glitches to add some interest.

"THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2 CHANNELS THE SPIRIT OF A CONFUSED, CRACK-ADDLED HOUSE SPIDER"



△○×□ There are lots of Spidey costumes for you to unlock, although we can't see why you'd bother doing so.

It's a familiar system – all the more baffling it is then that this game's developer has managed to make it so tedious. Timing matters not – feel free to randomly mash attack, occasionally pausing to counter (don't worry, you'll have a massive window) as you partake in EPIC battles that could include FOUR or FIVE enemies! There are a couple of Spider-Man specific moves, such as the web-pull, but these do absolutely nothing to alleviate the boredom that this game's sloppy and uninspired combat will induce.

In yet another hapless attempt to emulate the *Arkham* games, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* tries to mix things up with stealth sections. In concept, you can see how Spider-Man and stealth could fit nicely together; imagine using Spidey's unique climbing abilities to navigate an area unseen, skulking across a ceiling above oblivious guards, before silently rappelling down

from a beam and taking out a lone bad guy unawares – it sounds like it could work. Well, it doesn't, because the execution's just not there. *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*'s stealth sections are so badly designed and Spider-Man himself so clumsy to control that there's almost no satisfaction to be gained when you do successfully perform a silent takedown.

Talking of clumsy movement, traversing the sterile version of New York City in which the game is set should be one of the best things about the game. It's not. There's a lack of precision to Spider-Man's web-slinging, a sense that you're bumbling towards your destination rather than elegantly gliding towards it, something that's only exacerbated by *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*'s often errant camera. That's not what you want from a game in which you're playing the role of a superhero that's famed for the panache with which he can navigate urban environments.



TROPHY CABINET



ALL TIED UP

Upgrade your Spider-sense to display enemy vision cones and you won't have much trouble getting stealth takedowns.



FRIENDLY FIRE

Use web-pull to open up fire vents once Carnage stays aerial and then use seismic blast to knock him into the flames.



With its extremely poor mission design, dull world and lacklustre execution of mechanics implemented far better elsewhere, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* ends up feeling more like a game made in the PlayStation 2 era, when developers were still desperately trying to get to grips with open-world design, than it does a new PlayStation 4 experience. *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* is certainly not amazing, or even good. It's bad, it's unoriginal and it's criminally tedious.

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

A transparent and incompetent attempt to copy the *Arkham* series, this is a game that exudes the unmistakable stench of a budget title while it fails spectacularly.

25%



MLB 14: The Show

Sony knocks it out of the park



ALSO ON PS4 & VITA

WHY FIX WHAT

simply isn't broken? It's a straightforward philosophy; if something works, why change it? Sony San Diego seems to have subscribed to that adage, as *MLB 14: The Show* doesn't exactly reinvent the game of baseball. Despite the lack of innovation, the game shines with excellent presentation and true-to-life simulation, and for these we have nothing but appreciation.

MLB 14 does add some new features to its already robust simulation, most notably the revamped Road To The Show mode. Advancing your character's statistics has completely changed for the better, removing those silly 'advancement goals' and improving the in-game logic to properly simulate real-life evaluations. No longer will your player need to toil in the minor leagues waiting to complete one last task before ascending to the majors; if he's good enough, he'll get called up. The vast improvement of this system cannot be understated, as those tasks became quite the nuisance for no reason

other than making the game longer, and we're glad to see them go.

Also, the new Topps Amateur Showcase at the beginning of the mode puts you in charge of your player's destiny. You won't be able to just start as the next hot prospect; you'll have to prove it on the diamond in three amateur games. This adds a layer of strategy and tension that really heightens the overall experience, making it seem like we really were putting ourselves on the field from the get-go.

There are a few other enhancements of note. The new Player Lock system gives you the option of playing as a specific player at all times. Quick Counts is a neat idea that allows full nine-inning games to be played in 30 minutes or less, which is perfect for people who lament how long baseball can drag itself out. Most notable, however, is the overdue inclusion of Year-to-Year Saves, allowing you to *finally* carry saved Seasons, Franchises, and Road To The Show creations to future releases. We really didn't like leaving our All-Star players behind in previous versions, and

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
SCE San Diego Studio

PSN PRICE
£39.99

PLAYERS
1-4

INSTALL SIZE
21GB

AGE RATING
3+

TWITTER
@MLBTheShow

Trophies 24

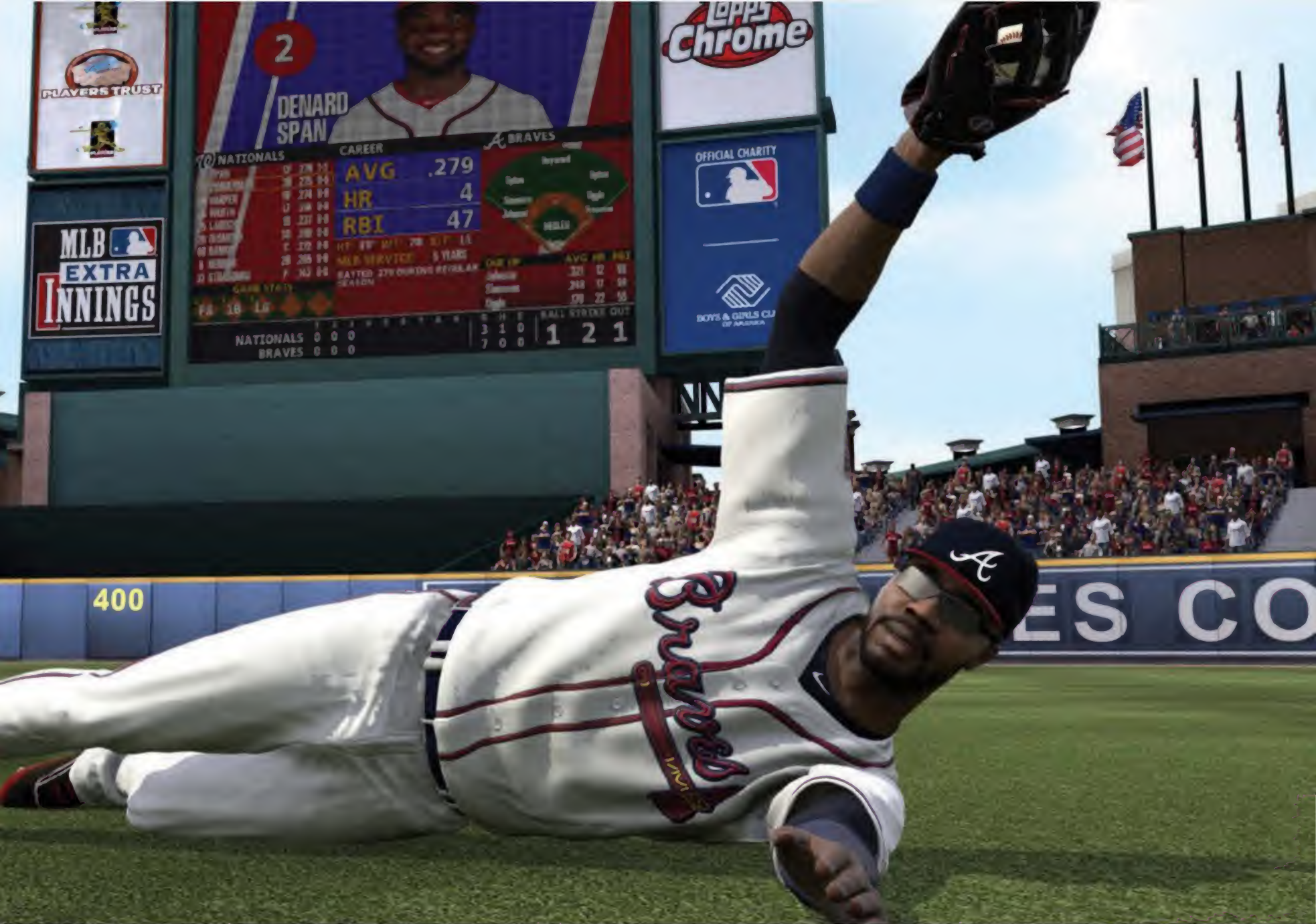


we're relieved that we won't have to say any more tough goodbyes.

Truthfully we can't think of any other impactful additions; the rest of them just add to the aesthetics and broadcast aspects of the game. However, that's not necessarily a bad thing. There's a reason why *MLB: The Show* performed so well in previous years that it released uncontested this year: the way it captures the realism of the game of baseball is unmatched. Players move and react in ways that actual players do during live broadcasts. The announcers calling the game are the most realistic sports announcers in videogames, reacting to the action as if they're sitting on the sofa next to you. *MLB 14: The Show*, like its predecessors, pulls you in and immerses you in baseball in a way that other games just can't match.

That immersion is what makes *MLB 14: The Show* one of the best baseball games yet. When the game is booted up and the teams are chosen, it's easy to get completely lost in what's playing





on-screen. We wouldn't be surprised that if 100 people were presented with an exhibition game in *MLB 14: The Show*, 99 of them would say it was as if they were watching a live game on TV. That's what *The Show* has done so well, and that's the main reason *MLB 14: The Show* successfully continues the legacy.

If you're looking for a completely different *MLB* experience from Sony San Diego, you aren't necessarily going to get one. The rest of us, though, still have a truly superb baseball simulation to enjoy, even if it's more familiar than we expected. Still, why fix what isn't broken? Jason Fanelli

VERDICT

MLB 14 doesn't change its winning formula much, to its benefit. The game keeps the *Show* legacy alive with excellent aesthetics and immersive baseball simulations.

90%

△OX□ This wasn't even a catch. This guy just loves to lie down in the middle of a game.



TROPHY CABINET



KING FELIX HERNANDEZ

King Felix may be the best pitcher in the game, but nine strikeouts with zero runs allowed is no small feat. Be precise with your pitches and pray for some luck.



GETTING A PIECE

A full nine innings with no strikeouts? We'd recommend an American League team so the pitcher doesn't bat and lots of practice at the plate before attempting.

"IMMERSION IS WHAT MAKES *MLB 14: THE SHOW* ONE OF THE BEST BASEBALL GAMES YET"



REVIEW ROUND-UP

YOU MAY HAVE noticed from the glowing reviews we've given games like *Toukiden* and *Soul Sacrifice* that we're big fans of the *Monster Hunter* template here on **Play**. As such, it's been a great month for us, with two updated versions in the form of **RAGNAROK ODYSSEY ACE [1]** and **SOUL SACRIFICE DELTA [2]**. While similar in structure, that's pretty much the extent of the pair's comparability – each sits at a completely different end of the spectrum of *Monster Hunter* clones and feels totally different. *Soul Sacrifice*, for instance, offers little to none of the exploration and tracking that leads up to the big boss battles in Capcom's games. You're dumped in a large arena and once you find your oversized grotesque quarry, that's it – all that's left to do is to wail on it until it falls to bits. *Ragnarok*, meanwhile, uses the same multi-room level approach as *Monster Hunter* and even though there's not as much freedom to explore as there is in the source material, it's just nice to have some kind of preamble before the main event kicks off.

Even stylistically, the two would struggle to be any more different. *Ragnarok* is straight-up anime in its design, with bright colours, cute characters and impossible hairstyles all over the shop. *Soul Sacrifice*, conversely, is a grim delight – a blood-soaked hellhole that fuses traditional gothic environments filled with twisted fairytale characters, corrupted sorcerers and misplaced body parts. *Delta* feels like the more polished game as a result of its more coherent and original art style, but even its huge boss monsters are better.

“WHILE RAGNAROK IS ENJOYABLE ENOUGH, DELTA IS THE BETTER GAME”

It's amazing how many of these are new for this update too and although some appear to be little more than reskinned versions of old ones, their new attacks and arenas make the fights feel totally different. And while *Ragnarok* is enjoyable enough, *Delta* is hands down the better game. There's absolutely tons to do and the wealth of new content over the original game – from more

powerful Offerings and beefed-up beasties to randomly generated quests and a more in-depth online mode – means that *Delta* probably just pips *Toukiden* as our Vita hunting game of choice.

The hunting format is perfect for gaming on the go, then, but there are some things we'd simply rather play on a home console. **BORDERLANDS 2 [3]** is one such game and while the team has done an incredible job in even just getting the game up and running on Vita, the sacrifices that have had to be made to do so really detract from one of our favourite games of the last generation. Co-op has been cut to two-player and enemies now come in far smaller numbers, so say goodbye to those wonderful *Borderlands* moments where Varkids or Bandits pour onto the screen and your insane arsenal is given a chance to show what it can really do – without such packs,

△×□ There's a surprising amount of new content in *Delta*, and existing saves carry across to the new version as well.



△×□ Kill big monsters, use their bits to make better gear. Yep, *Ragnarok Odyssey* is a *Monster Hunter* clone alright...





weapons that focus on AOE damage just feel nerfed as there simply aren't enough targets for them to rival more focused weapons in terms of damage output. Even with such concessions, the game is still incapable of holding down a steady frame rate and as soon as anything happens, it plummets. Again, this was true of the original game to a degree but with less powerful hardware to work with, the issue is annoyingly more frequent. As much as the game does manage to prove that Vita can run FPS games, it's still only *Killzone Mercenary* that makes a compelling argument for the fact that it *should*.

You'll find far less to complain about in **SHORT PEACE: RANKO TSUKIGIME'S LONGEST DAY [4]**, but only because

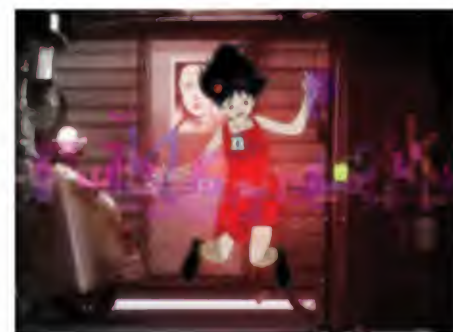


there's far less of it in general – even having finished the game in just under an hour, we'd still struggle to tell you what it actually is or what the hell happened. A fusion of *Sonic* and *Trials* is perhaps the closest comparison we've found so far, but it's far less interesting than that makes it sound. You just run right and occasionally hit things to set off combos, causing the screen to vomit rainbows and clip art. This mouthful of game is actually the final part of a five-course headache, the first four being anime shorts which are just as confusing. A novel distraction it may be, but it's simply too basic and short-lived for this to command a full-price release, especially when even a single episode of something like *The Walking Dead* can entertain for longer at a fraction of the cost.

Season Two's third episode **THE WALKING DEAD: IN HARM'S WAY [5]** is the strongest since the spotlight moved



△○×□ What is even happening? It doesn't matter, to be honest – the game is only half an hour long.



from Lee to Clementine. It offers both the most genuine shocks so far and a chilling warning for players who are perhaps pushing Clem a little too far. And with less reliance on QTEs (and zombies in general, for that matter), the character interactions and moral nightmares that Telltale does so well are given far more room to breathe and to shine. We were a little worried early on that this season would fall some way short of the first – after this episode, though, Telltale has never been better poised to repeat its breakout success.

△○×□ Michael Madsen puts in a superb performance as terrifying group leader Carver.





PS3 LIVES ON

DON'T SELL YOUR TRUSTY OLD CONSOLE JUST YET – THERE ARE LOADS OF GREAT GAMES ON THE WAY EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T UPGRADED TO PS4 YET



PERSONA 4 ARENA ULTIMAX

There's no shortage of excellent fighting games on PS3 already, but that doesn't mean we'll turn down an upgraded version of one of our favourites. Arc fighters tend to be pretty complex but this brawler bucks that trend, presumably since it's supposed to appeal to RPG fans who love these characters as well. *Ultimax* adds a bunch of new characters and stages, as well as making balance tweaks to attempt to level the playing field.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

GUILTY GEAR XRD –SIGN– – Another Arc fighter, but this one isn't actually hand-drawn – the stunning cel-shading just makes it look that way. The revival of this classic franchise has been far too long coming.



TALES OF XILLIA 2

With such a large install base, it's little wonder that many developers are still focused on PS3 rather than the blossoming new generation of hardware, especially with niche games. The *Tales* games have a loyal fan base and the brand is generally reliable – while we haven't enjoyed one as much as, say, *Eternal Sonata* or *Ni No Kuni*, they come so frequently that there's always a *Tales* game to play and another in the pipeline if you dig their real-time combat, anime stereotypes and soundtracks. Just don't go expecting *Final Fantasy* production values or you'll be disappointed.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

OMEGA QUINQUET – One of the few JRPGs currently announced for PS4, this idol-based oddity sends pop stars in search of a way to rid the land of The Beep. Which is possibly the strangest name for a terrible global threat we've ever heard.

SACRED 3

Who doesn't love loot? Action-RPGs like this are great source of shiny virtual trinkets and since there's not been another one since our *Diablo III* obsession faded earlier in the year, it's a welcome addition to the PS3 library. Co-op is the main focus here, with your hero always accompanied by three buddies. These can be controlled by other players online (although not locally, strangely) or the AI will pick these up – there are always four characters however you choose to play, though.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

DIABLO 3: ULTIMATE EVIL EDITION – A prettier, smoother version of the outstanding loot-drop RPG, complete with recent PC expansion *Reaper Of Souls* to bring a new class, loads of new areas and all the loot you can eat.





GRID AUTOSPORT

With just a matter of weeks between announcement and release, it's fair to say that Codemasters' latest racer pretty much came out of nowhere. Not that we're complaining, mind – *Driveclub*'s delay has left us wanting a racer to mess around with and these guys know what they're doing when it comes to cars. There's something for everyone here, with all disciplines from touring cars to street racing covered and while that inevitably means that some areas of the game will be stronger than others, such variety can never be considered a bad thing.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

DRIVECLUB – The delay has done great things for *Driveclub* and it's looking way better than it was. With a release date finally locked down and a free PS Plus version confirmed, hype is starting to swell anew.



ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV

The definitive version of Capcom's beat-'em-up is already available as a digital upgrade for owners of *Super Street Fighter IV Arcade Edition*, but there's a retail release coming later in the year. The roster has been rebalanced and five new characters join the mix – four from *Street Fighter X Tekken* and one all-new character in Decapre. There's also the new W-Ultra feature (which allows use of both of a character's Ultras at the expense of damage) and the Red Focus Attack, an enhanced version of the charged attack that can absorb multiple blows.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

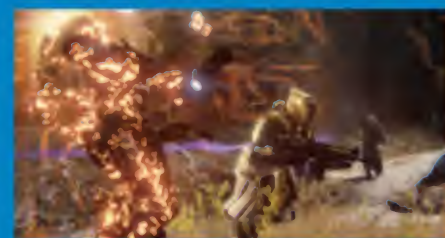
ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV – Okay, so it hasn't officially been announced at the time of writing, but you'd have to be crazy to bet against Capcom porting this final release of its best-selling fighter over to PS4.

ALSO ON PS4



FIFA 15 – ETA: SEPTEMBER

EA managed to hit the ground running pretty well with *FIFA*. Improvements abound for this year's version, and it'll be available for every console under the sun.



DESTINY – ETA: 9 SEPTEMBER

One of the most ambitious shooters ever. The team may not have much experience on Sony hardware but you'd never know that from what we've seen so far.



CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE – ETA: NOVEMBER

Was there ever any doubt that the biggest franchise on the planet would continue to ship on every major platform?



FAR CRY 4 – ETA: 21 NOVEMBER

While we don't expect the PS3 version of *Far Cry 4* to look much better than 3, that's only because Ubisoft was already wringing so much out of the console.



ALIEN ISOLATION – ETA: 10 OCTOBER

Creative Assembly steps away from *Total War* to deliver the take on the *Alien* movies that fans have always wanted.

THE BACKLOG

CHANCES ARE THERE are plenty of classics already out there that you haven't even touched yet. We asked both the gaming public and industry insiders for their top three PS3 picks – here's are the top 15 games from the poll to help you organise your own Pile Of Shame...



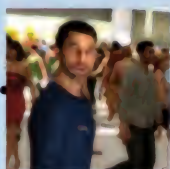
THE LAST OF US • 19%



UNCHARTED 2 • 10.9%



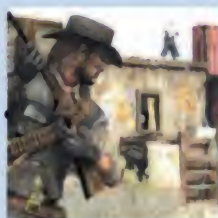
GTA V • 5.3%



HEAVY RAIN • 3.9%



SKYRIM • 4.2%



RED DEAD REDEMPTION • 4.9%



GOD OF WAR III
3.5%



METAL GEAR SOLID 4
3.2%



JOURNEY
2.8%



FALLOUT 3
2.8%



UNCHARTED 3
2.1%



INFAMOUS
2.1%



UNCHARTED
2.5%



MASS EFFECT TRILOGY
1.8%



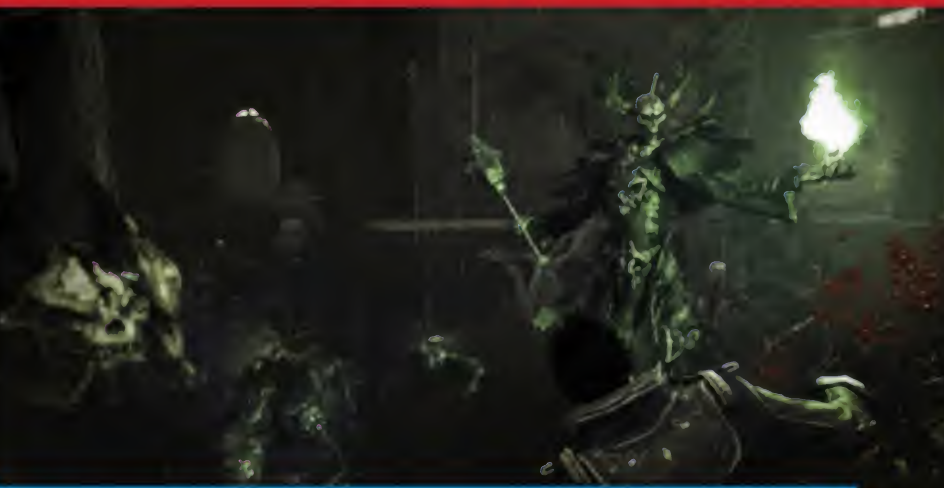
DARK SOULS
1.4%

PERSONA 5

The star attraction in a trio of new *Persona* announcements (the other two being a 3DS dungeon crawler and a Vita rhythm-action game), this proper sequel is the reason many JRPG fans can't bring themselves to part with their PS3s just yet. It's still some way off – there's no date set for it yet beyond a vague '2015' – but given that the series has produced some of the best traditional JRPGs of the last decade, it's safe to assume that Atlus isn't going to drop the ball with what will almost certainly be its PS3 swansong.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

FINAL FANTASY XV – The fact that Square decided to convert in-development PS3 title *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* into a full-blown numbered entry in the series means it's pretty far along, right? Yeah... about that.



RISEN 3: TITAN LORDS

While *Risen* isn't exactly the pinnacle of RPG gaming, it does seem to be getting better. The first game was just a mess but improvements to the pirate-themed sequel meant that while it was still pretty rough, it managed to earn itself a decent little cult following all the same. This time around, because everything is *Dark Souls* now, *Risen* is *Dark Souls* now. Okay, so it's likely just going more for the traditional fantasy approach. But either way, we'd like this to be good – we know people who swear by the second game, which is strange because we just swore at it.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

LORDS OF THE FALLEN – An even more shameless tracing of From Software's masterwork. Still, if it even manages to be half as good as a true *Souls* game, it'll likely turn out to be pretty playable. It might be time for someone to have a new idea, though...



NARUTO SHIPPUDEN: ULTIMATE NINJA STORM REVOLUTION

CyberConnect2 cemented itself as one of our favourite developers of the last generation, turning in a bunch of great *Naruto* games as well as classic OTT oddity *Asura's Wrath*. The team is back on *Naruto* duty now, with the one-on-one battles seeming to improve proportionally to the length of each game's title. Capturing the look and the excitement of the anime, these games are surprisingly good little fighters.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

UM... – There's nothing like this coming to PS4 any time soon – with its explosive effects and combos, *Injustice* is about the closest to it.



ASSASSIN'S CREED: COMET [TITLE TBC]

The fact that *Unity* is only in development for PS4 pleases us – without having to consider the weaker PS3 hardware, the game will be able to take full advantage of the new platform's power. But fear not, because Ubisoft hasn't forgotten about the huge PS3 install base just yet. While still only a rumour at the time of going to press, reports suggest that PS3 will get a new *Assassin's Creed* all of its own. Those same reports place it in a similar time and place to *Black Flag* (which makes sense, as the hard work is already done).

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

ASSASSIN'S CREED: UNITY – Moving from the high seas to the French Revolution means *Unity* will likely say goodbye to the seafaring action of *Black Flag* – even more reason to do two new games in tandem.



KINGDOM HEARTS HD 2.5 REMIX

A spruced-up re-release might not seem particularly exciting but after seeing what a great job Square did at revamping the original, we've got high hopes for the HD remaster of this superior sequel. A greater focus on action and spectacle lends itself perfectly to the cleaned-up presentation, while the opportunity to play through PSP spin-off *Birth By Sleep* will be a welcome inclusion for anyone who never owned a Sony handheld. There will also be a bunch of movie scenes and extra material from DS oddity *Re:coded*.

MEANWHILE, ON PS4...

KINGDOM HEARTS III – The true third game is early in development for PS4 – don't expect it to arrive any time soon, but the fact that it's coming at all is enough to keep us smiling.

ALSO ON PS4



MIDDLE-EARTH: SHADOW OF MORDOR – ETA: 10 OCTOBER

Borrowing from *Batman* and *Assassin's Creed*, *Shadow Of Mordor* will tell a new story set many years before *LOTR*.



THE EVIL WITHIN – ETA: OCTOBER

Traditional survival-horror has died as franchises have gone the action route of *Resi 4* and *Dead Space*. Can Shinji Mikami inject new life into the genre?



SNIPER ELITE III – ETA: 27 JUNE

Killcams are what make this great, and while the visual fidelity offers even more payoff on PS4, the game will most likely be every bit as enjoyable on PS3.



DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION – ETA: 10 OCTOBER

After the disappointment of *Dragon Age II* is there still enough of the old BioWare magic to make this great?



SKYLANDERS TRAP TEAM – ETA: 10 OCTOBER

Another year, another new set of toys. This year's gimmick is that in-game bosses can be captured in 'trap' models.



PUBLISHER SONY

DEVELOPER PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT PLAYSTATION

RELEASE DATE 29 SEPTEMBER 1995

PLAY SCORE 94%

METACRITIC SCORE N/A (PRE-METACRITIC)

The Making Of... WIPEOUT

In 1995, Sony needed something to turn the PlayStation from a 3DO-style also-ran into the world-conquering success it would eventually become. Enter a Liverpoolian team called Psygnosis, armed with an anti-gravity racer that would become a gaming phenomenon...



△×□ While the game is obviously technically dated, *Wipeout*'s art direction remains as striking as it was in 1995.

While the slogan "do not underestimate the power of PlayStation" was designed to advertise to Sony's new console to eager gamers, it might have served equally well as a warning to the incumbent hardware heavyweights of the day, Sega and Nintendo. Sony was the latest in a long line of challengers to try to break into the console market, following in the footsteps of the old hands at Atari, the ambitious upstarts at 3DO and the electronics giant NEC. But while Sony's predecessors had boasted and bragged about their machines, they had all failed to establish a foothold. The PlayStation, however, possessed what those doomed formats had lacked – the software to back up its manufacturer's bravado. The PlayStation had *Wipeout*.

Accompanying the PlayStation's European launch in 1995, *Wipeout* was in a league of its own. The 3D visuals were leaps and bounds ahead of anything seen on machines of the previous generation, while the licensed music from popular acts like The Chemical Brothers was reproduced in full quality thanks to the use of CDs over cartridges. The game itself was no slouch, either – the anti-gravity racing took place on tracks with dizzying heights and nerve-wracking plunges, and players were armed with an arsenal of explosive weaponry. It's a formula that long-term PlayStation fans know inside out, now so familiar that players have been somewhat numbed to its charms, but in the mid-Nineties *Wipeout* represented the cutting edge of console gaming. It was an astonishing game that seemed to arrive fully-formed, effortlessly encapsulating everything exciting about the era. Of course, the reality is that it was anything but effortless – a product of hard work and carefully blended influences.

"I'd been a huge fan of *F-Zero* and even the largely unplayable *Powerdrome*," says Nick Burcombe, lead



designer of *Wipeout*, in recognition of the futuristic racers that had come before. "But the biggest influence was really *Super Mario Kart* on the SNES." It's not a surprising admission – many developers were inspired by Nintendo's hit, with a number of clones appearing throughout the Nineties. However, it was Burcombe's customised experience of the game that led to *Wipeout*'s unique feel, as he explains. "I was on the final race and had turned the

"NO ONE HAD SEEN THE PLAYSTATION BEFORE OR KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH IT"

game sound down on my TV, replacing it with my own music at full volume (which happened to be *Age Of Love* by Age of Love), and it just seemed to work so much better as a game soundtrack. I was trying desperately to complete the game, the music intensity just went through the roof and I was just in another zone!"

This was the experience that Psygnosis would attempt to capture in *Wipeout*, by providing an aesthetic to match the intensity of the highly competitive, combat-oriented racing that lies beneath the cartoonish exterior of *Super Mario Kart*. Much of the game's feel was nailed down early as a result, with the help of some previous work. "The ship design had really come from Jim Bowers – if you watch the intro from Psygnosis' Amiga game *Matrix Mairauders*, you can see where it came from," Burcombe explains. This would prove to be important for the *Wipeout* team, as working with a brand new console was a major challenge.

"PlayStation was brand new in Europe when we started on *Wipeout*," recalls Burcombe. "No one had seen it before or knew what to do with it so it was a bit of a nightmare

coding for the system!" Psygnosis had been acquired by Sony in 1993, and as a result had early access to the new hardware, a privileged position for Burcombe and his team. "We had one of the earliest prototype PlayStation dev kits in the UK – it was about the size of a photocopier and was festooned with noisy fans which attempted to keep it cool during use. When a game was running the sound this thing created was almost unbearable – it was like a jet engine!" So early was the hardware that the specifications weren't yet finalised, as Burcombe explains. "Amazingly, it was only running at a third of the eventual speed of the production console, a fact which created further problems because it's hard to code a

game when you don't fully understand what the hardware is capable of. We were coding blind, to a certain degree."

Despite the struggles in putting the game together, *Wipeout* was shaping up well. "When I joined Psygnosis, there was already quite a buzz internally about *Wipeout*," recalls Damon Fairclough, who joined Psygnosis as a creative writer at the beginning of 1995. "I think my first inkling that it was going to be *really* special was when the team returned from E3 in 1995; it was one of the smash hits of the event, and the press were pouring praise onto it."

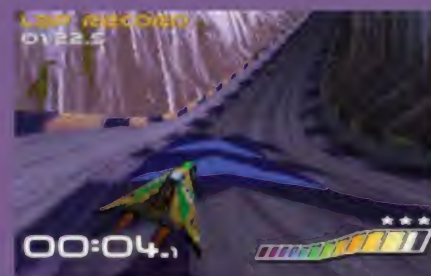
Not long after that event, Fairclough would get the chance to work on the game by working on its backstory. "Nick gave me a 500-word piece about the development of anti-gravity technology, along with pilot names and stats, and I used that as the basis for my work, which involved adding a lot more detail, more characters, really trying to make it sound like a real-world story rather than generic science fiction."

Players only familiar with *Wipeout*'s sequels might be



BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



1 Futuristic racing action, featuring anti-gravity vehicles and high-impact weapons.



2 Aggressive AI racers and unforgiving collisions offer even veterans a stern challenge.



3 Design by The Designers Republic imbued the game with an unrivaled visual style.



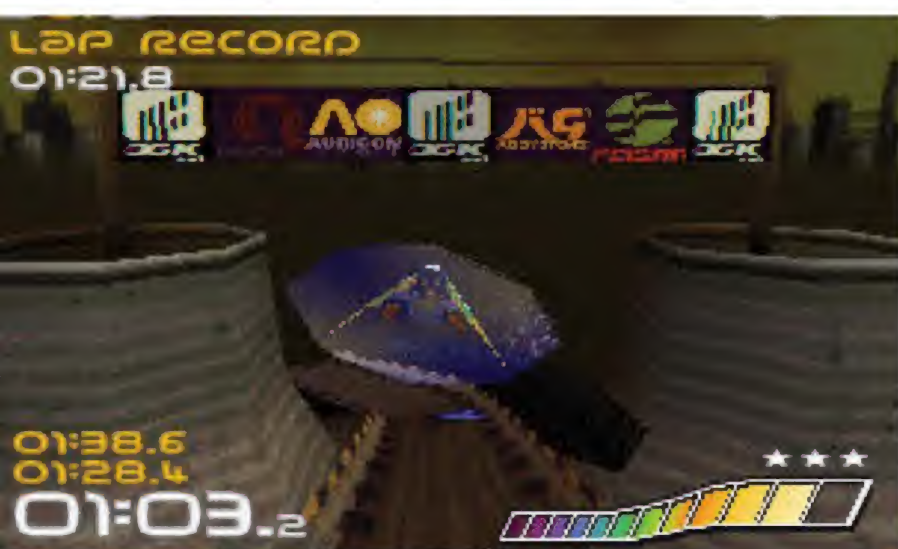
4 Music by The Chemical Brothers and more helped to establish gaming in the mainstream.



5 Arguably the most important exclusive in the PlayStation's European launch line-up.



△○×□ Big jumps are a common feature in *Wipeout* designed to emphasise the game's 3D visuals.



△○×□ Teams didn't sport their familiar colour schemes in the first game, with each driver having their own paint job.

FURTHER READING



OLDER – Super Mario Kart

Nintendo's classic laid down the blueprint for *Wipeout*'s item-enhanced racing, and remains one of the best multiplayer games of all time.



NEWER – Blur

Mixing real cars and fantasy weaponry, *Blur* is an excellent racer that was widely overlooked, featuring an item system with unrivalled tactical depth.

STANDOUT MOMENT



Unlocking Firestar

For racing masters, one final challenge awaits

Wipeout's structure was simple – a series of races across six tracks, with a third place finish in a field of eight racers required to complete one track and progress to the next. But conceptual simplicity masked practical difficulty, as making progress was a challenge. After the initial Venom

championship, the faster Rapier championship was unlocked. Those who managed it received a reward – Firestar. Set on the surface of Mars, the track was the game's hardest and represented the ultimate challenge for those who believed they had mastered *Wipeout*.

confused by the mention of characters. The original *Wipeout* assigned each team two distinct drivers – a feature that would remain absent from most sequels, with the exception of the PlayStation 2's *Wipeout Fusion*. The drivers had little bearing on the in-game action as your choice of team determined the stats of your ship, but Fairclough's goal was to add flavour to the experience, as he explains. "As writers, we would take the opportunity to have some fun with this stuff – adding all kinds of details and elements that might bring the narrative to life."

Indeed, it's hard to imagine what *Wipeout* would be without its distinctive sense of character. Beyond its plausible depiction of a future that was neither utopian nor post-apocalyptic, but merely further developed, *Wipeout*'s futuristic feel was aided by its aesthetics. "I was a big Designers Republic fan, having moved over from Sheffield where they were local heroes," Fairclough

reminisces. The team provided a distinctive and eye-catching visual style for the game that appeared on the packaging, as well as team logos, weapon icons and the like. But the real coup was the game's association with club culture, made possible by the game's licensed music. "That dance/club culture was on the cusp of going mainstream, but still hadn't quite tipped over the edge," Fairclough recalls, "so although clubs like Cream were huge, they still had a credible quality that *Wipeout* totally tapped into." Sony smartly capitalised by putting the PlayStation demo units into these popular clubs.

If the idea of consoles in clubs sounds a bit casual, the game's stiff challenge will quickly set you straight. Previous consoles had lacked game saving features as standard, so the default course of action for game designers was to make games that could be finished in one sitting, but were so hard that it was unlikely, ensuring value for money. *Wipeout* maintained that design – collisions of any sort slow your ship to a halt, and AI racers



are ferocious, letting loose rockets and missiles whenever they get you in their sights. While the clubbers never seemed to mind, this high level of difficulty proved to be the key criticism of the game, and was the first thing to be removed in the long series that followed.

Also providing room for improvement were the game's multiplayer features.

"THE TEAM RETURNED FROM E3 IN 1995; IT WAS ONE OF THE SMASH HITS OF THE EVENT"

"Maintaining frame rates would have been impossible for us so split-screen was a no-go. Even getting the link cable working was a nightmare," Burcombe explains. "Just sheer bloody mindedness got it working!" The impractical set-up demanded by a link cable game – two PlayStations, two TVs and two copies of the game – meant that the game never gained the reputation as a multiplayer favourite enjoyed by its inspiration, *Super Mario Kart*, even after

the series finally gained split-screen play in *Wipeout*.

Reflecting on the original game nearly 20 years down the line, Burcombe's feelings are clear. "An amazing game to have been a part of and I'm proud to have been a part of the team that pushed racing into the future." Fairclough is similarly fond of the game. "I worked at Psygnosis for

four years, on lots of games, and I'm proud of the writing work I did for other titles, particularly the huge universe I developed for *Colony Wars*. But with *Wipeout*, I found myself at the heart of a genuine game culture phenomenon. And that, even for just a relatively brief few years, was a brilliant place to be." Ultimately, that's what *Wipeout* was – more than just a game, a next-gen experience that captured the cultural zeitgeist, and a true phenomenon.



TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

How *Wipeout*'s notorious difficulty concealed its final bug

"*Wipeout* was so hard that nobody on the test team could complete it from start to finish in one sitting," recalls Burcombe, who was convinced that the game could be completed in one go. "One night I stayed late at the office with a few beers and decided to do exactly that. I must have had to restart about 20 times, but then in the early hours, I finally did it. Almost inevitably, it crashed before the credits rolled! It was probably the last crash bug we knew about in the game and was discovered the night before gold master approval."

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MotoGP 14

THAT'S EVOLUTION

INTERVIEW

MOTOGP 14

Milestone's Andrea Basilio talks up the new features that stand to make this year's two-wheeler the best yet

How will *MotoGP 14* be different to the last game in the series?

We've added three offline game modes and one online game mode. We also have five different rosters – we have the rosters for this year, so that's Moto3, Moto2 and MotoGP for 2014, and we have the MotoGP roster from last year. There's also the Champions Roster that's made up of the most famous riders from the sport, and we've improved the physics, engine and Career mode. They're the most visible things that we've done this year.

This is the first game that Milestone has developed for the PlayStation 4. How challenging has the transition been?

Yes, it was a big jump from the past generation, especially in terms of hardware performance. But it wasn't as big as the jump to PlayStation 3. The PlayStation 4 is quite similar to PC architecture.

During the presentation, you mentioned that the game uses a new graphics engine. Did you build the new engine from scratch or did you build upon the old one?

We wanted to keep all our trademarks, such as the evolving track that simulates the build-up of rubber on the circuit. But for everything else, we started from scratch. The rendering aspect of the game is completely new.

The new Safety Car mode will allow MotoGP fans to burn around their favourite track on four wheels rather than two. What was the inspiration behind this?

It was less of an inspiration and more of a possibility that we thought about and made a reality. We have some knowledge of car physics thanks to our work on the *World Rally*



△×□ Basilio confirmed that the PlayStation 4 version will run at 1080p and at least 30fps.

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Championship series and we think our fans will really enjoy the safety car. It's not the core of the game but it's a nice plus for our players.

Considering that you've had less than a year to develop the game, what's been the primary focus?

The majority of our effort has been working on the new engine. We redid all our assets for next-gen, and in terms of game modes, we put a lot of effort into Real Events 2013. It offers players a good way to relive the last season of the championship.

The Real Events 2013 mode sounds like an interesting proposition and a good way to add more single-player mileage, but why is Milestone only including it now?

It was an idea that we came up with last year, actually. It was inspired by the last season because every race was amazing. Sure, Marquez won a lot, but there were a lot of battles between Marquez and Lorenzo as well as Marquez and Valentino. It was easy to find at least one standout moment in every race.

Is the objective to re-enact the race? And if so, can you give me an example?

Yes, that's exactly it. In one race last season, Marquez pushed too hard without any grip on the tyre and he fell. We have that challenge in the game and the player has to win the race with almost no grip left in the tyres. Every track will have a challenge like that.

How do the new Champion Challenges compare to The Real Events 2013?

The idea is similar to Real Events 2013. We looked at the riders we had in the Champions Roster and then picked out the most famous battles from 1993 onwards. My favourites are the battles between Max Biaggi and Valentino Rossi. When those two were rivals it was huge in Italy.



△OX□ All 18 tracks from the MotoGP 2014 season are in the game, and that includes the new Autódromo in Argentina.

You mentioned that the decisions you make in the game's Career mode will now be more meaningful than before. What did you mean by that?

If you have a favourite team or you think that your career would be better with more milestones, you can ask your manager to follow a particular team and get you a job with them. That's the basic idea.

The motorbike development in *MotoGP 14* appears to be more involved. Can you tinker around with a few more settings than you could before?

The settings are more or less the same. The thing that's changed is that you can now gather data packs as you complete laps in the Career mode. You can use these to improve the different components of your bike. We included this because our fans asked to be more involved with the bike's development.

You said the physics calculations are now three times more accurate than they were previously. What impact is this going to have on the player experience?

The physics will be more precise in every movement. When you turn the stick the bike is going to be more precise, and when you jump off a curb, the consequences will be more authentic.

Playing the game, it felt like the riders were less huddled together than before. With this in mind, how have you improved the AI?

Every rider is different and we've done our best to reflect that in the game. Some riders prefer a particular track while others like to ride in the dry more than the wet. The personality that each rider has on the track is also really important. Bautista is more aggressive than other riders, for instance, but we've changed all AI bases from the ground up. So now the riders behave more realistically, they move more convincingly and they form better lines. They're smarter, basically.

What has been the hardest part about developing *MotoGP 14*?

We've been working with a really short window. We had ten months to develop the game and we have to release it at the start of the championship. That makes it really hard to get all the references correct. Fidelity is really important to us and that's been the hardest part.

What's been the best?

Going on the track [laughs]. But seriously, it's been an amazing experience working with a licence that I'm so passionate about. I'm probably the biggest MotoGP fan in the company, so when I get to see the riders playing the game and then listen to their feedback, that's pretty amazing.

EXTENDED PLAY

FIFA 14



There's quite a lot of football happening at the moment. If you just can't get enough of it, why not fill any downtime in the World Cup schedule with a few games of FIFA? The game has evolved incredibly in the last few years and now offers even more ways to play than ever before, so here are a few of the more interesting ones



ULTIMATE TEAM (MODE)

■ WHO WOULD HAVE thought that it'd be a trading card game that turned out to be one of the most appealing and financially lucrative aspects of a football game? It makes sense, when you think about it. Many of us grew up trying in vain to fill sticker albums and this scratches the same itch, with the thrill of pulling a rare player from a virtual booster never getting old. It does suffer a little from pay-to-win

syndrome, and you can generally tell which opponents have spent money on boosters from how blinged up their teams are – assembling a half-decent team can be one hell of a slog if you aren't willing to spend but you can still get there in the end if you're willing to put the time in. Year by year, this mode has been increasingly monetised by EA, and it now seems to be the cause of more account thefts than pretty much any

other game available. After hearing so many horror stories about users having their accounts hijacked and hundreds of pounds spent on virtual players, we decided not to save our credit card information on our accounts any more, and in the interest of not running the risk of having your savings used to bankroll some toerag's shiny gold team, we recommend you do the same.



PRO SEASONS (ONLINE)

■ LIKE ULTIMATE TEAM, FIFA's Be A Pro mode has gone onto bigger and better things since it debuted in *FIFA 08*. Following in the footsteps of inventive PlayStation footy game *Liberio Grande*, Be A Pro allowed players to lock themselves into a single position with AI players filling the remaining ten slots and gradings dished out for how well the position in question was being played. Today, this has been taken to its logical conclusion in Pro Seasons, an online variant of the same concept where each of the 22 players can be controlled by a

human player. It can be all kinds of chaotic if people don't stick to their roles and play them well (read: pretty much all the time) and often ends up feeling more like a playground match than a top-flight clash. But on the very rare occasion that it all comes together, there's simply no experience quite like it in the digital sports world. We tend to favour the purity of classic 1v1 and 2v2 play, sure, but this is an altogether different way to play and one we wholeheartedly recommend you put some time into.



PES 2014 (ALTERNATIVE)

■ WAIT! DON'T TURN over just yet! We know that *Pro Evo* hasn't exactly been in great form since the PS2 era but last year's release was as close as we've come to the glory days of Konami's series. As ever, it lacks a lot of the polish and official licensing that FIFA fans will be used to and as such feels somewhat budget by comparison. But out on the pitch PES is arguably

as satisfying and complex as it has ever been. With this year's PES due to be the first for PS4 (powered by MGSV's Fox Engine, no less) and a change in title holder overdue, it might be an idea to get to grips with the nuances of PES now, ready for when it eventually manages to reclaim its crown. As lifelong fans, we'd love to see that day come sooner rather than later.



2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BRAZIL (STANDALONE)

■ IF YOU'VE COME down with a bad case of World Cup fever lately, this spin-off to tie in with the tournament is perhaps the best cure. It's not as tight a game as *FIFA 14* on PS4, sure, but the atmosphere and sense of occasion is pretty much second to none, plus you'll have all the national squads from the main event at your fingertips along with all the accurate modes, groups and stadiums. It's only worth full price if you're an absolute World Cup nut and probably should definitely have just been DLC (like the *Euro 2012* add-on was) but in terms of offering a digital approximation of one of the biggest sporting events in the world, EA's *World Cup* comfortably tops its group.

Watch Dogs Online Masterclass

Invaders stealing your data? There's an app for that. Also, some tips...



SIT TIGHT

One of the most effective hiding places is in a parked car, but the trick is to get the location right – a fixer running towards the front of the car may still be able to profile you as you slump in the driver's

seat in darkness. For best results, find a secluded spot where other cars are parked, face the wall and pull right in close (ideally between other vehicles) before turning off the engine and laying low.

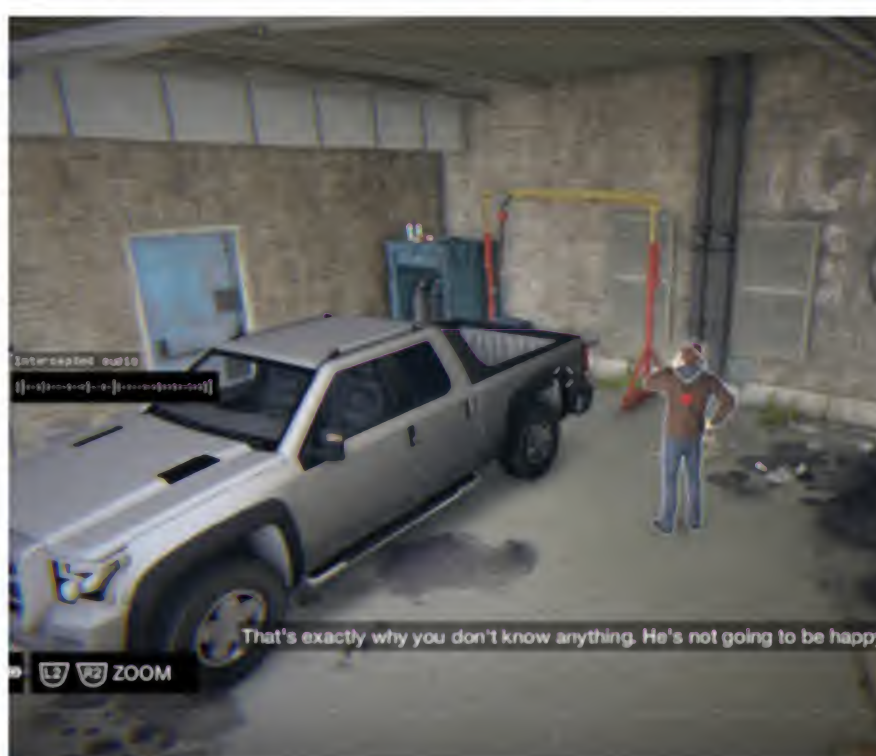


HACK DERAILED

Chicago's train network isn't just for fast-travelling around the map – it's a potent tool for hackers who know how to use it. While you can't take cover or hide while on board, the windows do give you full radial view of the area to allow quick escapes and an early perk lets you move the train itself. Park it up between stations and you can usually hack in peace or hide from invaders for as long as you need.

DON'T PANIC

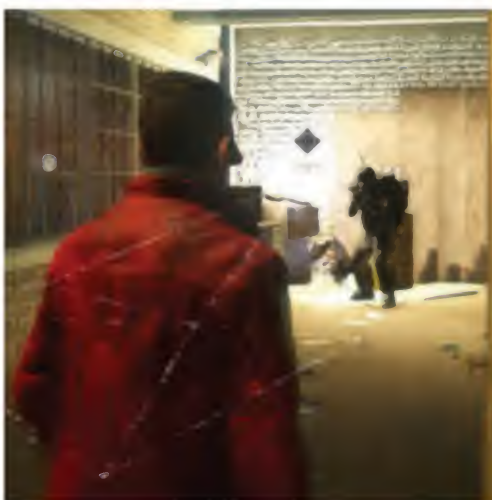
The natural response when invaded is to get as far away from the danger zone as possible but escaping will only help if your hunter is tailing rather than hacking – hackers may be able to spot you before you make a break for it, giving you more ground to cover once they initiate a backdoor installation. More reliable is keeping calm, staying relatively still and watching your surroundings. Invaders tend to act fast, so you can still make a break for it if a hacking attempt isn't made immediately.



CAMERA SHY

Some hackers and victims like to bunker down as soon as invasions occur, but most decent hiding spots still fall under CCTV coverage. Get behind cover and use the cameras yourself to sniff them out, leaping from one to the next until you track them

down. If your hiding spot is good enough, you should be able to trace or observe without the rival fixer even getting close to your location, but keep an eye on the lines that come off their phones – these will show if they're trying to spy on you too.



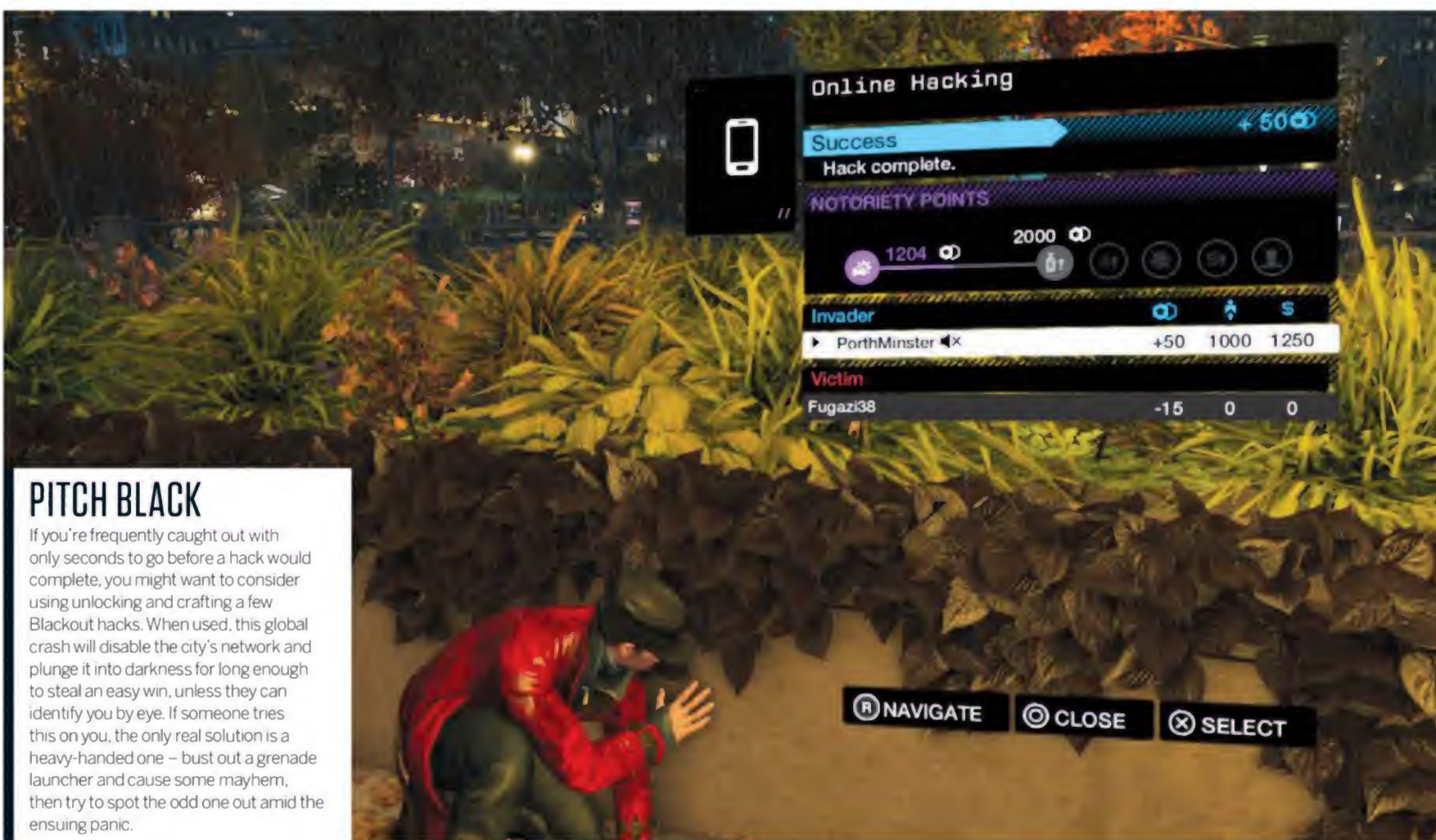
DANGER CLOSE

Picking a hiding spot based on hackable objects in the environment is crucial, as blowing out a steam pipe or shorting a substation could buy you enough time to escape if your location is compromised. Misdirection can also really help here – set off an explosion or similar distraction away from your location and you might just be able to pull pursuers off your scent and escape to somewhere they've already searched.



SHOTS FIRED

If you're having trouble profiling a large crowd quickly enough to find a troublesome hacker, simply whip out a gun and fire a few warning shots into the air. NPC reactions are pretty easy to recognise and unless the invader is particularly quick and/or smart, you'll likely buy yourself a few valuable seconds to pick out your pursuer. If possible, take out any snitches quickly too – police intervention usually means victory for the hacker as you struggle with two problems at once.



PITCH BLACK

If you're frequently caught out with only seconds to go before a hack would complete, you might want to consider using unlocking and crafting a few Blackout hacks. When used, this global crash will disable the city's network and plunge it into darkness for long enough to steal an easy win, unless they can identify you by eye. If someone tries this on you, the only real solution is a heavy-handed one – bust out a grenade launcher and cause some mayhem, then try to spot the odd one out amid the ensuing panic.



ESCAPE PLAN

As the hacker or tailor, always be sure to have an exit strategy. Dying on the job will always cost you far greater than cutting your losses and making a getaway (which usually comes with a reward, if only a small one), so know when you've pushed your luck far enough and make a break for it even if it means blowing your cover – alive is always better than dead and there's always next time.



BUMP AND GRIND

While killing the target is a big no-no and melee attacks don't work on other players, there are other non-lethal 'stun' tactics worth considering. When discovered, for instance, you'll usually be the first to get into a vehicle – give the victim a slight bump with your car, enough to knock them down but not kill them. This should buy you enough time to get a comfortable lead. Distant explosives or well-timed hazard hacks can also do the trick.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS
TROPHY GUIDE

May's PS Plus collection was a mixed bunch, but a selection that would be impossible to snub. Sadly the PS4 game is a bit of a letdown with *Stick It To The Man* – a good game, no doubt, but not exactly up to the usual standards. Elsewhere PS3 gamers got *Puppeteer* and *Payday 2* – both great games. PS Vita owners were offered *Muramasa Rebirth* and *Everybody's Golf*, too, which is a brilliant pair. You'll probably want some of those Platinum Trophies, right? Right.



STICK IT TO THE MAN

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5 **TROPHIES:** 16 🏆 0 🥈 1 🥉 0 🏆 15

■ **THIS IS** A good little game, make no doubt of that. But there isn't a Platinum Trophy, sadly, so you'll have to just enjoy the handful of Trophies that are here. They mostly involve reading minds of particular people, but since there's a Trophy (the only Gold one, in fact) to read *everyone's* mind, most will come naturally. Just make sure you read every mind you can (including your own in Chapter 9 for 'Out Of His Mind') at every opportunity, even those you've already read – just to be sure. Elsewhere there are a couple of stealth sections that need to be navigated without being spotted: bypassing the nurses in Chapter 6 and the helicopter in Chapter 7. It'll take practice, but just make sure you don't get spotted throughout the entire section (this includes with spotlights) and remember that if you do get caught you can just restart the checkpoint and start at the bottom of the tower, the Trophy will still unlock.



PUPPETEER

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5 **TROPHIES:** 63 🏆 1 🥈 1 🥉 3 🏆 58

■ **THE COLLECTION OF** Trophies is fairly typical, with 21 unlocking just for finishing the game, most of the others unlocking after defeating enemies in particular ways and the rest divided between collectibles. Thankfully there's a level select so you won't need to worry so much about any missed items, and truth be told some you can't collect until you've unlocked certain abilities anyway – don't be afraid to just finish the game first before worrying about this. There are quite a few level-specific challenges you'll need to look out for as well, though. Make sure you read each of the descriptions, and keep out for the right situations where these can be completed. They are very specific. The only one here to keep an eye out for is 'Butterball Bailout' in Act V, Curtain II: after rolling across a gap on top of a hamster wheel (with a dragon inside) follow the falling platforms until you come to a pit with caterpillars and firepits – you need to hit that caterpillar so you are flung into the air and through a tunnel. This is the secret area you'll need to reach. There are also four co-op only Trophies to unlock, though you can just do this yourself with a second controller easy enough.



PAYDAY 2

PLATFORM: PS3

DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 44 1 4 7 32

■ INITIALLY IT MIGHT seem that *Payday 2* is quite difficult, but the more you play (and learn the levels) the easier it becomes – in that regard, *Payday 2*'s Platinum is a bit of a grind and it's highly likely you'll need a decent co-op team to help you out. There are some Trophies to aim for when you can, though. 'Fish AI' must be unlocked on the Watchdogs level; all you need to do is take a cocaine bag and throw it into the water. 'The First Line' is better done with at least one other player at higher ranks, the OVE9000 Saw and a lot of ammo bags – since you'll need to crack into as many safety deposit boxes as you can to find the Overkill dev team poster. For 'I Knew What I Did Was Wrong' you'll need the OVE9000 Saw again on day one of the Big Oil heist; here you should enter the basement of the building, use the saw on all eight ATMs, then take the cash from each. Then there's 'Let's do Th...', which takes a bit of luck if you want to do it solo. You'll need to finish the Ukrainian Job in under 35 seconds, so equip the suit and a light pistol then – as soon as the mission begins – race through to the back rooms and use a Shaped Charge (it needs to be unlocked) to destroy one of two safes and hope the tiara is in there. If it is, grab it then run to the exit for the Trophy.



MURAMASA REBIRTH

PLATFORM: VITA DIFFICULTY: 4/5 TROPHIES: 42 1 3 12 26

■ AS GREAT AS *Muramasa Rebirth* is, if you want that Platinum you'll need to play it at least three times – Fury Mode (where a single hit will kill you) will require a hell of a lot of practice before you're ready. It's not impossible once you know how, but be warned. After finishing the game as Momohime, you'll need to complete the tutorial again as Kisuke for '...Ninja Dog?' (or vice versa for 'Valkyrie, ARISE!'). Meanwhile, during the prologue level you'll need to inspect the first road barrier before finishing the stage (these are ghostly barriers that guide your route through the game) for 'Aren't WE Precocious?'. The Trophy 'Kerouac Has Nothing On You' can only be completed once you've finished the game, at which point you'll need to traverse the game destroying all the white road barriers that are blocking roads. There are many more Trophies to *Muramasa*, but the rest are pretty much self-explanatory.



EVERYBODY'S GOLF

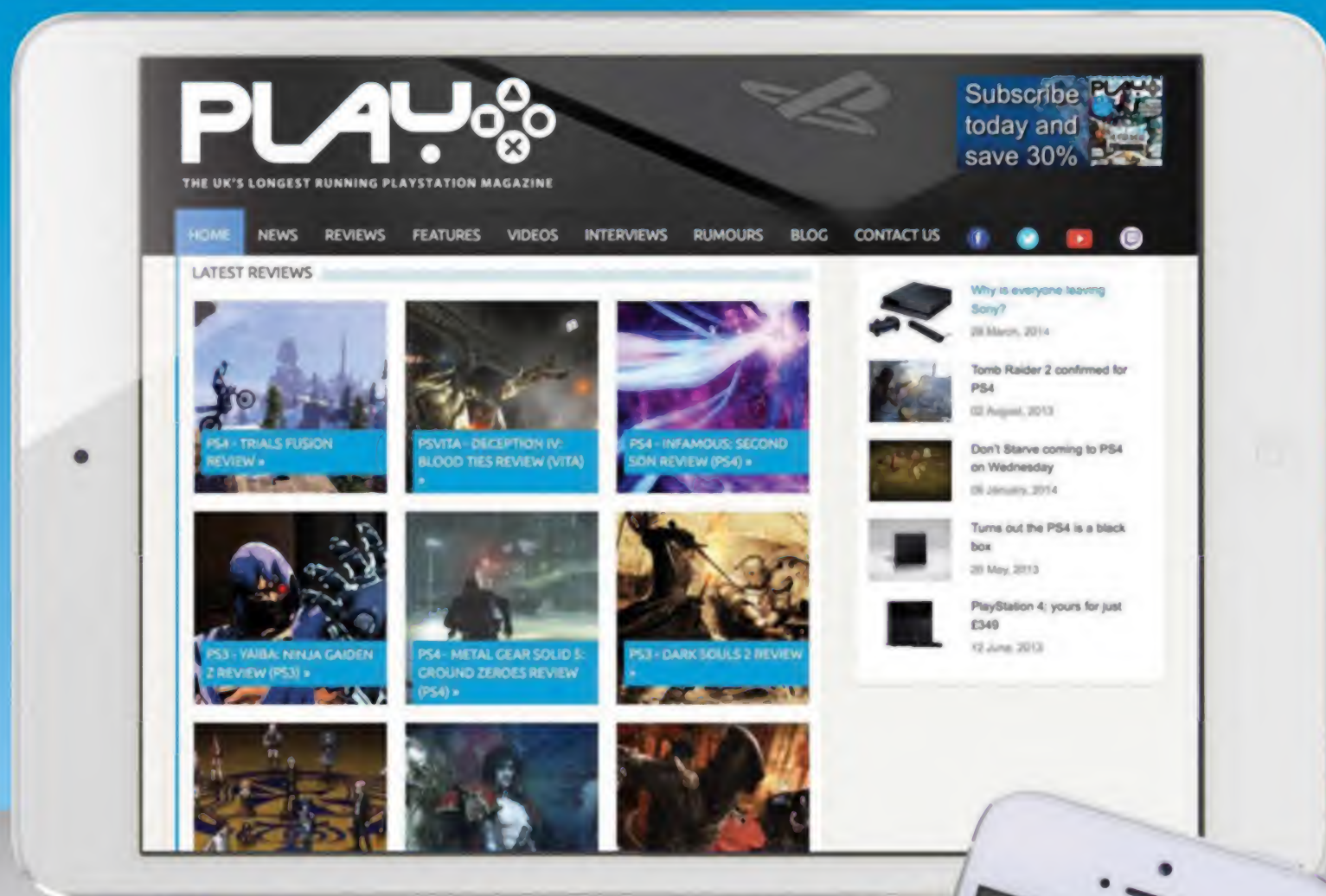
PLATFORM: VITA DIFFICULTY: 4/5

TROPHIES: 37 1 5 9 22

■ SINCE ALL OF the Trophies in *Everybody's Golf* are fairly simple to understand, we'll instead give you some pointers in working towards getting a hole-in-one. Here you'll be aiming for 'It's a Miracle!' and 'Go for the Ace!' by playing a Par 4 course and scoring a hole-in-one. You'll need a Par 4 course that is short enough that you can reach the green in a single shot, and while there are a number of options available Maple Leaf hole 1 and Kagurayama CC hole 2 are both great options. Obviously this is highly down to luck, but you'll want to pick a character who has a high power and control stats and whose loyalty is quite high – this will make it easier to actually get control of the ball. It will take a lot of practice, so don't bother aiming to get this Trophy until last, because you never know whether the unlikely will happen while playing through the game naturally.

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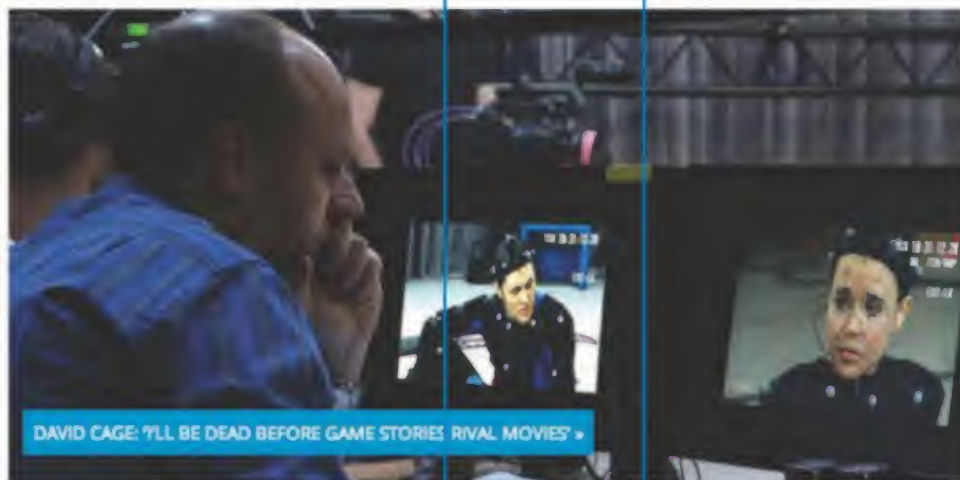
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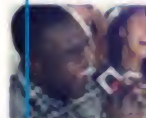
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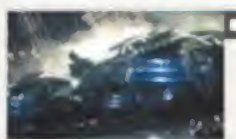
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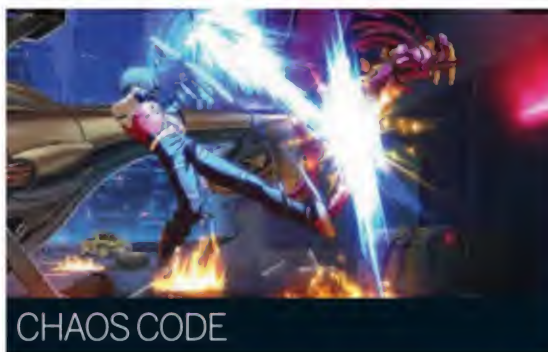
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TOURNAMENTS!

Our regular tournaments continue – normally every fortnight, but keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels to more up to date information. The game changes each time, but the reasons for playing don't: free games and other goodies for the best players, every time! Come and join in the fun next time and you could win something neat.



CHAOS CODE



Our fighting game of the month is an obscure Taiwanese oddity that looks like it came out about ten years ago.

It's right good fun though, so tune in and watch us beat the tar out of each other. One of the characters is a chef that batters people with saucepans. That should be all the info you need.

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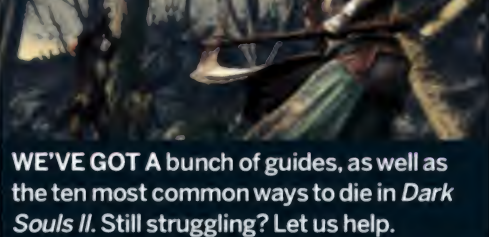
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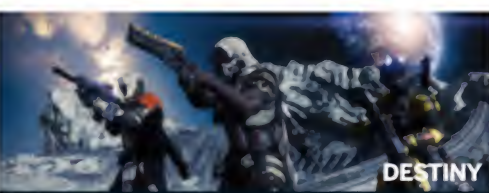


WE'VE RANKED THE PS4 games we are most looking forward to. Are your picks in there or are we dead wrong?

DARK SOULS II



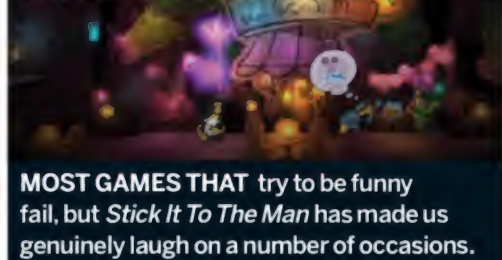
WE'VE GOT A bunch of guides, as well as the ten most common ways to die in *Dark Souls II*. Still struggling? Let us help.



DESTINY

TO SAY WE are excited for *Destiny* is something of an understatement. Listen to us go on about it for a while.

STICK IT TO THE MAN



MOST GAMES THAT try to be funny fail, but *Stick It To The Man* has made us genuinely laugh on a number of occasions.



ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV

CHECK OUT ALL five new characters as we get ready for the release of the final version of *Street Fighter IV*.

BATMAN: EVOLUTION OF A HERO

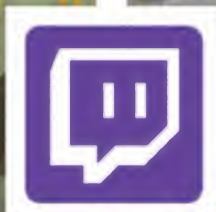


WE CHART THE genesis of *Batman* games from the old-school days of the Spectrum through to the upcoming *Arkham Knight*. The Bat's never looked better.



PIXELJUNK SHOOTER

The next PS Plus game on PS4 has been announced and it's... *PixelJunk Shooter*, a game that came out five years ago on PS3. Still, we make do with what we have, so this month come along and watch us stream some *PixelJunk Shooter* – it's old, but it is a good game.



RETRO STUFF

We've got a bunch of old games stuffed away in a massive cupboard that we dig out occasionally and stream for a blast of nostalgia. Fancy seeing us get frustrated with *Enter The Matrix*, or tackling *Rugby 2002*? You know what to do.

SHARING



PS4: THE COMPLETE MANUAL

If a monthly dose of *Play* isn't enough, check out Imagine Publishing's new bookazine, *PS4 The Complete Manual*. It's a guide to your new console, from basic stuff through to advanced tips, along with a verdict on every game currently available. Pick it up for only £7.99 in any good mag retailer, or order one from greatdigitalmags.com.



DOWNLOAD PLAY BACK ISSUES

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NOWGAMER

All the breaking videogames news, exclusive videos and expert comment can be found on our multi-format website... www.nowgamer.com

PLAY+PLUS PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS PSONE GAMES



top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 PaRappa The Rapper
- 2 Final Fantasy VIII
- 3 Resident Evil 2
- 4 Soul Blade
- 5 Vagrant Story



top five LIAM WARR

- 1 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
- 2 Soccer '97
- 3 Rollcage
- 4 Destruction Derby
- 5 Brian Lara Cricket '99



top five STEVE HOLMES

- 1 Metal Gear Solid
- 2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
- 3 Driver
- 4 Tekken 3
- 5 Resident Evil 2



top five SAM SMITH

- 1 Final Fantasy VII
- 2 Metal Gear Solid
- 3 Resident Evil 2
- 4 Street Fighter Alpha 3
- 5 Crash Bandicoot 3

PS4 LISTING

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Battlefield 4	238	80%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Child Of Light	244	79%
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	74%
Don't Starve	240	81%
inFamous: Second Son	242	86%
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Knack	238	55%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
Mercenary Kings	244	85%
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	60%
Outlast	241	73%
Resogun	238	91%

An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff

Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Thief	241	70%
Tiny Brains	240	68%
Trials Fusion	244	80%
War Thunder	239	80%

PS3 LISTING

007 Legends	225	44%
1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	70%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Kneel Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Skechter	201	85%
Beowulf	161	61%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%

Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.



The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	188	93%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DIRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DIRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	199	71%
Cresent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	85%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	164	53%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Souls II	242	90%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
Digger HD	186	52%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
 DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Droplitz	184	91%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeons & Dragons: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	233	51%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
Elefunk	170	45%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Eurfloria	212	85%
Everybody's Golf 5	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Explodemon	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	87%

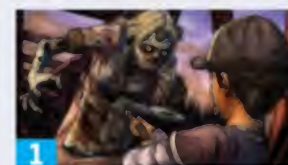
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	236	90%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Fuse	232	73%
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Geon	175	71%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
 With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, Ascension is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.		
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grand Theft Auto V	236	97%
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%
Grid 2	232	79%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guardians Of Middle-Earth	227	71%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%

2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	69%
Trials Fusion	80%
Mercenary Kings	85%
Lego The Hobbit	65%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	60%
Child Of Light	79%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	80%
Destiny Of Spirits	76%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Inversion	220	49%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	80%
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	206	91%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In The Shadows	173	69%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN ZOMBIE GAMES



1 The Walking Dead



2 The Last Of Us



3 Resident Evil 6



4 Dead Rising 2



5 Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare



6 Dead Island



7 Dead Space 2



8 Call Of Duty: World At War



9 The House Of The Dead: Overkill



10 Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



METAL PLAY: SACRED 2: FALLEN ANGEL

Sacred 2 was an average RPG but featured a theme song by German power metal legends Blind Guardian. This alone is enough to earn it a thumbs up from us.



BEAUTY PLAY: RAYMAN LEGENDS

The UbiArt engine is capable of producing some simply stunning scenes, coming closer to the style of a watercolour painting than we've seen before.



PLANES PLAY: WAR THUNDER

Free-to-play World War II flight sim *War Thunder* is a treat for the aviation enthusiast, full of minute details and various ways to customise your plane.





AWFUL PROTAGONISTS PLAY: INFAMOUS

Infamous was a pretty good game, but Cole McGrath was not a good character. In fact, he was so dull we even had trouble remembering his name when writing this. Boring.





BEING A HIPSTER PLAY: AQUAPAZZA: AQUAPLUS DREAM MATCH

What better way to prove your superiority than by playing a game that no one else has ever heard of? It's a pretty good fighter to boot, but you don't care about that.


GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	208	70%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
 <p><i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.</p>		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	202	51%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Minecraft	240	93%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 10/11	204	64%
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	173	60%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
 <p><i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.</p>		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numbast	183	60%
Okami HD	225	90%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Pain	183	69%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	235	79%
Peggle	189	94%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
 <p>Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play.</p>		
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	67%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	236	70%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen" Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	195	80%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Soldner-X-2: Final Prototypes	195	70%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	81%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	230	79%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	242	62%
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
 When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%
 The <i>Walking Dead</i> should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium.		
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Topolai: Spinning Through Worlds	183	61%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Home	162	31%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaz	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrent Story	189	82%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vandel Hearts: Flames of Judgement	192	87%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	195	65%
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipeOut HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	224	85%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ballis Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC Real II	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 12	212	50%
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
 Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion. <i>XCOM</i> is a phenomenal remaking of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yar's Rev	206	57%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	182	78%

PS VITA LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	233	85%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	239	80%
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipeOut 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

Soul Sacrifice

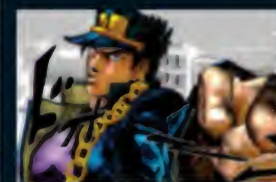
WHY (was it chosen?)

There's loads of new stuff in Delta

LUKE ALBIGÉS

IT DOESN'T TAKE

much encouragement to get me to return to a *Monster Hunter* clone when there's not a lot else to play. Indeed, word of an improved online system and some new big ugly buggers to farm was all it took to get me to pick up *Delta*, but I found a hell of a lot more besides. The Save/Sacrifice mechanic is enhanced by a third Fate option, with a faction based around each – based on which you choose and how you play, points can be cashed in for faction standing in an ongoing online power struggle. More importantly, though, there are loads of new and enhanced monsters, meaning there's also a bunch of new loot. And with that, he waved goodbye to another 100 hours...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle

WHY (was it chosen?)

Because it's super fabulous

SAM SMITH

I'M A HUGE *JoJo's* fan, and was planning to import *All Star Battle* before it was announced that the game would be getting localised. It's not the best fighting game, but as a love letter to the manga it is simply sublime. It looks fantastic, it's great fun to play and it's absolutely packed with references to over 20 years of manga. I love it to bits. ORA!

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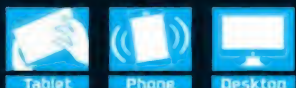
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very probably the finest
cricket game
ever made"
8.7 / 10
LazyGamer.net

"I
have no
hesitation in calling
it the best cricket
game yet."
Planet Cricket

"The greatest cricket game of all-time"

Intuitive controls that allow for line and length deliveries without pitch markers and realistic shot control when batting.

Take a 16 year old aspiring cricketer through the ranks to international glory in career mode.

Fully customise your play experience, setup tours, competitions, create players, teams and even umpires in the Cricket Academy.

Access thousands of Community created players and teams, ready for download and use in the game.

Hone your skills to perfection in the Practice Nets before taking to the field.

Dynamic time of day, weather and pitch wear that will keep you on edge, as no two matches play the same.

Continue your match whenever you want with the unique Online Save System.

The most realistic physics ever seen in a Cricket game including thin edges, bat pad catches, intimidating bouncers and much more.



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